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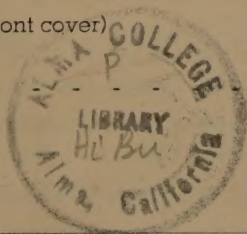
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# The HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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# THE PURITAN SPIRIT IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

HAROLD L. STANSELL

REGIS COLLEGE

THE history of Puritanism is a fascinating and intriguing study, but in many respects not a very satisfying one. Familiarity with the works of those who have given much of their time to the study of the Puritan way of life leads one to the conviction that a clear and thorough understanding of Puritanism is attained, if at all, only with great difficulty. The more one analyzes the history of Puritanism, the more one appreciates the difficulty of being able to start from a simple and universally acceptable definition, for the simple reason that the meaning of the word Puritan becomes ever more elusive, its application ever broader. William Haller realized this after his research into the rise of Puritanism and felt constrained to conclude that there were Puritans before the name was invented and that there probably will continue to be Puritans long after it has ceased to be a common epithet.<sup>1</sup> This is a conclusion with which Marshall M. Knappen concurred when he wrote that "the beginnings of Puritanism may be traced back to the Middle Ages, and we have yet to see its end."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, anyone who wishes to delve into history in an effort to expose certain traces of the Puritan spirit in some historical development must endeavor, in spite of the difficulties, to ascertain just what the Puritan spirit was. Investigation reveals that the term Puritan is used in various ways, which for the purposes of this study may be reduced to two. First, the word Puritan denotes a way of life which has certain basic characteristics and which has a rather broad application; secondly, the word is used in a more restricted sense to denote a specified group of men in a definite period of history. When the word Puritan is used in this latter sense it refers to that group of men in the Church of England who organized in the time of Queen Elizabeth with the purpose of carrying out the Protestant

<sup>1</sup> William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938, 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries* (M. M. Knappen, ed. Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1933), 1.

reformation to its logical conclusion.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, this understanding of the term Puritan has no place in the present investigation. In its broader sense the word Puritan is used to denote a religious movement which was essentially Calvinistic; one which had as its foundation the basic virtues of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness;<sup>4</sup> and which from some inner necessity drove its adherents to endeavor to establish the holy community here on earth.

However, it must be remembered that although John Calvin and his early disciples were preoccupied with the role which God as the absolute arbiter and governor of all things played in all things pertaining to creation, animate and inanimate, the Puritans of a later day under the influence of the Deists tended to abandon Calvin's religious teaching while closely adhering to his moral precepts. This development was described by Chesterton with characteristic succinctness when he wrote, "In most cases the Puritans lost their religion and retained their morality; a deplorable state of things for anybody."<sup>5</sup>

The Puritans who abandoned Calvin's God but kept his morality developed certain common characteristics which can be found even among those who became preoccupied with the affairs of this world. These characteristics can conveniently be summed up under three heads. First, in the realm of ecclesiastical affairs, the Puritan maintained that it was imperative that he should lead a return to the simplicity of the Church in Apostolic times; secondly, in those things that pertain to good morals, the Puritan must actively engage in a crusade to transform corrupt society and see to it that all men lead virtuous lives; finally, the Puritan must set up the holy community so that the "elect" might possess the land, even when the "elect" meant only the simon pure patriot. In those societies, then, where the Puritan managed to make his

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Puritan Pronaos* (New York: New York University Press, 1936), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Calvin himself stated that the actions of life which must glorify God are reduced to three classes—sobriety which denotes chastity and temperance with a pure and frugal use of temporal blessings; righteousness which includes all the duties of equity; and godliness which separates man from the pollutions of the world, and unites him, by true holiness, to God. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (2 vols. English trans., Philadelphia, 1936). III, 7, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert K. Chesterton, *As I Was Saying* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1936), 45.



influence felt we see in the words of Tawney, a

picture grave to sternness, yet not untouched with a sober exaltation—an earnest, zealous, godly generation, scorning delights, punctual in labor, constant in prayer, thrifty and thriving, filled with a decent pride in themselves and their calling assured that strenuous toil is acceptable to Heaven . . .<sup>6</sup>

Such, in very brief summary, is a picture of the Puritan way of life. The purpose of this study is to endeavor to ascertain whether or not these characteristics of what, for practical purposes, may be called the Puritan spirit, can be found in the unfolding of the French Revolution. The task at first sight is a difficult one, for, as Crane Brinton points out, the average foreigner is inclined to look upon the French as a people who are at all times and places thoroughly Rabelaisian.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, even a superficial review of the history of France from the Protestant Revolt to the French Revolution will reveal the existence of certain men who bore more than a tinge of Puritanism; men whose influence was not inconsiderable even on the eve of the Revolution.

The men referred to are, obviously, the Huguenots and the Jansenists. The former managed to hold themselves together in spite of the ill-advised revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and on the eve of the Revolution numbered, according to the best available figures, about 500,000.<sup>8</sup> The number of the Jansenists in France in 1789 cannot be given with any degree of accuracy because the Jansenists never admitted that they were outside the Catholic Church; as one writer puts it, "they neither accepted their exclusion, nor renounced the authority of the Church that had condemned them."<sup>9</sup> But however much the Jansenists protested that they were true sons of the Church, it cannot be denied that they had much in common with those followers of John Calvin who were known in France as the Huguenots. For example, Bernard Groethuysen in his study of Jansenism emphasizes the fact that the Jansenists stood for a reform which would emulate

<sup>6</sup> Richard H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1926), 210-211.

<sup>7</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Jacobins An Essay in the New History* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), 175.

<sup>8</sup> A. Aulard, *Christianity and the French Revolution* (English trans., Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1927, 24.

<sup>9</sup> R. R. Palmer, *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), 25.

the simplicity of the early Church when he calls attention to the influence of the Jansenists on the lower clergy as follows, "the Jansenists longing for a pure Christianity aloof from all secular concessions persisted and continued to inspire the lower clergy with a desire to reform the Church."<sup>10</sup> The existence of the Jansenist view of life must be kept in mind in the present study because some of the members of the Oratory of Divine Love were influenced by the teaching of the Jansenists, and it was the Oratorians who were given charge of a number of the Jesuit colleges after the suppression of the Society of Jesus in France in 1762.

There can be little doubt, then, that there were men in prerevolutionary France who were imbued with the Puritan spirit; men who manifested the same sternness in their attitude to life as the most devoted follower of John Calvin; men who made the same insistence on external virtues, who had the same austere and uncompromising attitude toward those who did not agree with their view of life; men who had the same absolute sureness of being right which made forbearance with the faults and weaknesses of others an impossibility. The Puritans moreover, of all lands and times, were insistent on industry, thrift, and frugality. Besides, professing a doctrine which made salvation depend solely on an eternal decree of God, and removing all belief in the possibility of working for an eternal reward, the Puritan's interest in time became entirely intramundane and he bent every effort toward making the world safe for the "elect" by building the heavenly city on this earth. The question remains, can one legitimately maintain that there were vestiges of this Puritan spirit in the French Revolution?

If there is any validity in the premise that the basic characteristics of the Puritan spirit can be reduced to three, namely, reform in ecclesiastical organization to achieve greater simplicity; the crusade to improve the morals of all by legislating people into leading virtuous lives; and, the effort to establish the holy community, then, it will be legitimate to conclude that there were traces of the Puritan spirit in the French Revolution.

In the first place, with reference to the question of ecclesiastical reform, there was a determined effort on the part of a group of headstrong men to bring about a reform not only in the morals of the clergy, especially those of the higher clergy, but also to introduce changes which would make for greater simplicity in

<sup>10</sup> Bernard Groethuysen, "Jansenism," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), VIII, 371.



the organization of the Catholic Church in France. It is true that there was not an overt attack on the hierarchical organization of the Church; but it is none the less true that the proposed reorganization of the Church in France so struck at the foundations of the hierarchy that the charge of attempting to introduce presbyterianism was openly made from the floor of the Assembly. As early as August 20, 1789, the members of the National Assembly provided for the formation of an ecclesiastical committee. To this committee was entrusted the task of providing for the expenses of public worship after a decree of November 2, which declared that all Church property was at the disposal of the nation.<sup>11</sup>

The Ecclesiastical Committee was composed of fifteen members; the more vocal of these members being magistrates or lawyers of the *parlements*; men who were learned in Canon Law, and who were known for their Gallicanism and Jansenism.<sup>12</sup> The Bishop of Clermont, the first president of the committee, insisted on proceeding cautiously, too cautiously for some of the members who succeeded in forcing him to yield the chairmanship to the well-known Jansenist, Jean-Baptiste Treilhard. But even Treilhard was not able to direct the activities of the committee as he would wish, and a deadlock ensued. At the suggestion of the new chairman the Assembly doubled the number of members on the committee; the deadlock was broken and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was reported out of the committee, this took place late in May, 1790.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was divided into four parts. The first part was concerned with the reorganization of the diocese in France, it stipulated that a diocese should be coterminous with a *department*, and ordered that all dioceses above the number of eighty-three were to be abolished; the second part provided for the election of bishops and pastors by all qualified voters, Catholics and non-Catholics; the third part arranged the wage scale for the salaries which the state was to pay the clergy; finally, the last part set down rules pertaining to the residence of bishops.

The debate on the Civil Constitution of the Clergy became bitter, and the Jansenists led by Treilhard and Camus, had to

<sup>11</sup> It is of more than passing interest that the first proposal that the ecclesiastical revenues should be taken over by the government was made by the Huguenot, Pierre-Samuel Dupont.

<sup>12</sup> C. Constantin, "Constitution Civile du Clerge," *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique* (Paris, Letouzey, 1930-), III, 1548.

work hard to keep their handiwork from being destroyed. It is true that a recent study of the non-parliamentary origins of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy has established the conclusion that the decree was the work of men whose chief concern was a victory for *étatisme* rather than the work of those whose chief concern was a vindication of the Jansenists, the regeneration of the Church, and the achievement of a quasi-presbyterianism.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, it is still difficult to gainsay the fact that it was the Jansenists, Camus and Treilhard, who fought so persistently, and successfully, for the constitution, as well as the fact that the charge of presbyterianism was openly levelled at the proponents of the constitution.

A perusal of the debates on the constitution will reveal evidence of a spirit which was kindred to the Puritan spirit. For example, Treilhard, speaking before the Assembly on May 30, pleaded for the suppression of benefices and collegiate churches (*collegiales*), on the grounds that they were useless, so full of abuse, and so dangerous for religion.<sup>14</sup> The arguments used to support the new constitution for the Church in France remind one of the vigorous denunciations of the Puritans of other times and places. It was the same Treilhard who in the course of the debate insisted that the proposed changes were useful and that they would establish foundations which were designed to bring about good reforms and assure the faithful ministers of great integrity and of great virtue.<sup>15</sup>

Armand-Gaston Camus so ably and censoriously supported his co-religionist, Treilhard, that Aulard was moved to comment that in his (Camus') eyes the National Assembly "was a council, and a Jansenist council at that."<sup>16</sup> Camus vigorously defended the provisions regulating the election of bishops and *curés* and appealed to that favorite authority of John Calvin, Saint Augustine, to support his contention that elections to ecclesiastical offices were accepted as the proper mode of attaining those offices in the primitive Church. In the course of his defense, Camus in denouncing the bishops for declaring that they were waiting for

<sup>13</sup> Arthur P. Levack, *The Principal Immediate Non-Parliamentary Origins of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1941), 356.

<sup>14</sup> *Moniteur* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1858-1870), IV, 498.

<sup>15</sup> *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française* (Buche, B. J., and Roux, P. C., eds.; Paris; 1834), VI, 15.

<sup>16</sup> A. Aulard, *Orateurs de la Révolution. L'Assemblée Constituante* (Paris: Cornélj et cie., 1905), 442.



the sanction of the Sovereign Pontiff, added, "as if there was any other such than Jesus Christ its founder."<sup>17</sup> His meaning was not lost on his hearers, and there were demands from the right that Camus declare what religion he professed.

As the debate raged on, the Jansenists found allies who came to their support. Usefulness became the focal point of much that was said, and who will deny that the Puritan was greatly concerned over those practices in the Catholic Church which seemed to serve no useful purpose in the religious life of man. On May 31, 1790, it was Maximilien Robespierre who rose to support the arguments of the members of the Ecclesiastical Committee. In Robespierre's opinion, priests had their place in the social order as true magistrates who were destined for the maintenance and service of the cult. Usefulness is the maxim according to which it should be decided whether benefices, cathedrals, collegiate churches, along with the *curés* as well as the bishops, can exist in any society; consequently, if these are not demanded by the public needs, they must be done away with.<sup>18</sup>

The inevitable consequences of the new proposals regulating the ecclesiastical constitution in France were not lost on some members of the right. Speaking on May 31, 1790, Leclerc, a *curé*, took a firm stand against the proposed decree on the grounds that it advocated presbyterianism, when he said, "We boldly condemn a doctrine which leads to presbyterianism, and if we find it impossible to place ourselves in opposition to it, on the day of judgment the bishops will have the right to ask us to render an account of our cowardice."<sup>19</sup> This accusation was not lost on Treilhard; it drove him out into the open and he attacked the hierarchical organization of the Church by arguing that the fact that Saint Peter presided over the Council of Jerusalem did not give him jurisdiction over the other bishops.<sup>20</sup> This outburst was met by Jean-Jacques d'Espreménil who remarked that the Assembly had been transformed into a council, and a schismatic and presbyterian one at that.<sup>21</sup> When a fellow Jansenist of Treilhard's, Emmanuel Marie Freteau, took issue with d'Espreménil, he was met with the caustic remark that he, d'Espreménil, was astonished that a man as well instructed as Freteau was ignorant of

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 443.

<sup>18</sup> *Moniteur*, IV, 504.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Moniteur*, IV, 522.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

the fact that the *curés* render an account of their conduct to the bishops, and the bishops, in their turn, render an account of their conduct to the provincial councils, and, d'Espreménil added, when you give simple priests jurisdiction over the bishops, you establish real (*véritable*) presbyterianism.<sup>22</sup>

The proponents of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy protested their loyalty and devotion to the Catholic Church, but they were forced in the heat of debate to manifest their true sentiments. The *curé* Leclerc saw through their protestations and did not hesitate to lay bare their true aim when he pointed out that the members of the Ecclesiastical Committee proposed only suppression and destruction. Leclerc called the attention of the Assembly to the fact that houses of religion no longer existed, and that bishoprics and archbishoprics, collegiate churches and cathedrals were menaced with proscription, and, this, he concluded, was taking place in a country which made profession of the Catholic religion.<sup>23</sup>

In dealing with ecclesiastical affairs, then, some members of the National Assembly gave evidence of certain manifestations of a Puritan spirit; such manifestations as the demand for a return to the simplicity of the primitive Church; making the possession of ecclesiastical offices depend upon election by the people; suppression of religious orders and solemn vows; and, finally, by giving evidence of the conviction that by instituting a reorganization of the Church, reform of morals would be assured. Tréilhارد himself sounded the keynote of the campaign when he told the deputies that the proposed changes of the Civil Constitution would lead to good reforms, and would assure to the faithful ministers of the highest integrity and virtue.<sup>24</sup> In so doing, he laid himself open to the charge which Chesterton levelled at all Puritans, namely, they lost their religion but retained their morality.

Because of limits of space it is impossible to enter into a discussion of that second basic characteristic of the Puritan spirit, namely, the crusade to improve the morals of all men by legislating them into leading virtuous lives. However, mention should be made of the fact that the members of the National Convention, under the leadership of the Jacobins, made definite efforts to carry on a moral crusade for the regeneration of France. In

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 523.

<sup>23</sup> Buchez at Roux, *op. cit.*, VI, 18-19.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.



doing so they gave evidence of a spirit which was akin to the Puritan spirit which was manifested by efforts to improve the morals of Frenchmen by legislation. In the course of the moral crusade great emphasis was placed by the Jacobins on the surveillance of all citizens. Though much that was said on this subject concerned patriotism and the necessity for citizens constantly to be on the alert for subversive activities against the Republic, it became clear in time that the watchfulness was to be extended over moral conduct of others because the Jacobin was convinced that morality was a norm by which patriotism could be judged. The attitude of the Jacobins to anything approaching slothfulness, as well as their penchant for abolishing holidays, and legislating in matters concerning prostitution, the theatre, and begging, gives clear evidence of a spirit which could easily have been recognized in all of the Puritan commonwealths.

Over and above the intensive moral crusade, the aim of which was the reformation of the social and moral habits of men, there was, in all societies in which manifestations of the Puritan spirit are to be found, a determined effort to set up the holy community. This is the third, and in many ways the most important, of the basic characteristics of the Puritan spirit. Recent investigation into the history of Puritanism has induced one author to formulate the following working definition of Puritanism in its social and political aspects, "Puritanism means a determined and varied effort to erect the holy community and to meet, with different degrees of compromise and adjustment, the problem of its conflict with the world."<sup>25</sup> The same investigator after an analysis of the motivation of a certain Puritan faction, the Millenarians, arrived at the conclusion that these Puritans repudiated, or at least were indifferent to, the democratic ideas of agreement, of representative institutions, and of safeguards for the rights of the individuals; and, consequently, boldly put their feet on the road which leads not to the democratic state but to junta and dictatorship.<sup>26</sup>

The basis for this development in the Puritan concept of government can easily be found in the writings of John Calvin. As Calvin saw things, God willed that society be governed in such a way that the "elect" would be guaranteed a safe conduct through the trials of life. Consequently, Calvin undertook to

<sup>25</sup> A. S. P. Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1938), 36.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84.

show that magistrates, that is, those men who held the power of governing in civil society, were men appointed by God, men who were also constituted by Him the ministers of divine justice.<sup>27</sup> As such, they were also constituted "the protectors and vindicators of the public innocence, modesty, probity, and tranquillity, whose sole object it ought to be to promote the common peace and security of all."<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, these magistrates, in the words of another Puritan divine, Richard Baxter, must be vigilant against the enemies that sow the seed of sedition among men, and must supply every vacant place with godly, valiant men, while weeding out the ungodly and seditious.<sup>29</sup> With these directives of the spokesmen of the Puritans in mind we propose to investigate the history of the attempt to establish the Republic of Virtue in France in 1794, to see whether there is any similarity between the planned ideal society of a group of French revolutionaries and that of the Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The efforts of the Jacobins to establish the Republic of Virtue were accelerated when they gained control of the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Committee of Public Safety by their *coup d'etat* on June 2, 1793. Only then did they feel that they were finally in a position to prosecute their aims in earnest. Much has been written in defense of the program of the Jacobins on the grounds that the policy which they followed was made necessary by the war which France was waging against nearly the whole of Europe. Much can be said for this contention and those who live in the twentieth century know well how a nation can gird itself for war and subordinate all other activities to one primary objective. But it is doubtful that the summary actions of the government of a nation at war can justify the waging of a vigorous campaign for the improvement of the morals of the people under the pretext that the nation needs virtuous men to win its battles.

The Jacobins lost little time in their efforts to improve the military situation. On August 23, 1793, the *levée en masse* was ordered. By September the English and Austrian forces were stopped in the north, and the Alsatian frontier was secured by the French army. By December the English were forced to yield Toulon to the Republican army. The price of these victories,

<sup>27</sup> Calvin, *op. cit.*, IV, 20, 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 20, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Baxter, *A Holy Commonwealth* (London: Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton, 1659), 264.



however, was high as far as the liberties of Frenchmen were concerned. In September the Convention passed the Law of Suspects and in doing so put a very effective weapon of terrorism in the hands of the Committee of Public Safety. The Law of Suspects stipulated that not only those who showed themselves sympathetic to the royalist cause should be considered suspects, but also those who could not justify their means of existence or who failed in the performance of their civic duties. The implications of this law were far reaching, for, once the true patriot was defined as a virtuous citizen, the way was prepared for the denunciation of all those who looked with the slightest favor on the enjoyment of the good things of this life. This Law of Suspects, especially when it was enforced by Jacobins who maintained their pristine fervor, went far toward verifying in France what Tawney has written of Calvin's Geneva, namely, it was a city of glass in which every household lived its life under the supervision of a spiritual police.<sup>30</sup>

The effort to establish the Republic of Virtue did not reach its climax until the leaders of the Jacobins made sure of their control of the Committee of Public Safety. It was not until September, 1793, that it was obvious that sufficient control had been won. Late in that month, Robespierre, the spokesman for the Jacobins on the Committee of Public Safety, lectured the Convention on the necessity of strong measures in order to preserve the republic. Once the convention succumbed to the censorious preaching of Robespierre the initiative passed to a determined group of men who capitalized on their chance and perfected the machinery of the Terror by pushing through the decrees of October 10, and December 4, 1793. The decree of October 10, declared among other things, that the government was revolutionary, that is, super-constitutional,<sup>31</sup> until the peace, and placed the provisional executive council, the ministers of the government, the generals, and the *corps constitués* under the surveillance of the Committee of Public Safety which was to render an account to the Convention every eight days.<sup>32</sup> The decree of December 4, strengthened that of October and provided specified punishments for every infraction of the law, every betrayal of one's trust, every abuse of authority committed by a police official or by any

<sup>30</sup> Tawney, *op. cit.*, 117.

<sup>31</sup> James Mathew Thompson, *The French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 9.

<sup>32</sup> *Moniteur*, XVIII, 110.

other principal or subordinate agent of the government in the civil military administration.

These two decrees considered in themselves do not necessarily imply that their authors were determined to set up a holy community. They could be, and have been defended on the grounds that they were necessary for a nation at war. However, it is a fact that just when the machinery of the Terror was being perfected, the French armies were beginning their triumphant advance against the enemy on all fronts. Brinton called attention to this fact when he pointed out that during the bitterest months of the Terror the French armies were fighting on foreign soil.<sup>33</sup>

There seems to be need, then, for additional explanations of the insistence by the members of the Committee of Public Safety on a strong centralized government. One possible explanation can be found in the speeches which Maximilien Robespierre made shortly after the decree of December 4 was passed by the Convention. Robespierre, an acknowledged leader of the Jacobins, gave evidence that he was preoccupied with an ideal, an ideal which envisaged a France purged of all corrupt men and their practices while virtue reigned supreme. In the eyes of Robespierre every true citizen of the Republic must be a virtuous man; but if a man is corrupt in morals, it was a sign that he was an enemy of the republic and a friend of those who wished to promote counter-revolution. Many of the things which Robespierre said remind one of the ideal of the Puritans who longed for the day when the "elect" would realize their destiny in the City of God on earth.

The more one studies Robespierre in his speeches and his declared determination to make France virtuous by force of terror,<sup>34</sup> the more one is inclined to agree with those historians who have concluded that Robespierre was a Puritan, albeit, a secular Puritan. Limits of space make it impossible to summarize the evidence which has led historians to this conclusion; however, it will be very helpful to refer to one of the conclusions of a man who has given much of his time and effort to the study of the life of the lawyer from Arras. James Mathew Thompson has remarked that Puritanism means more than moral preaching and strictness in one's private life; it often means also untiring effort

<sup>33</sup> Crane Brinton, *A Decade of Revolution 1789-1799* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1934), 130.

<sup>34</sup> H. Morse Stephens, *The Principal Speeches of the Statesmen and Orators of the French Revolution* (2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 296.



in making others conform to a virtuous way of life, an effort which sometimes culminates, as it did in Robespierre, in the ruthless shedding of blood, because the Puritan is often a "conscientious inquisitor, torturing the body that he might save the soul."<sup>35</sup>

With a self-righteousness that reminds one of the "elect" of the Puritan Commonwealths, Robespierre looked upon the enemies of France and their abettors as the reprobate from whom no good could be expected. He divided men sharply into two classes, and gave the ominous warning that those who did not conform to the code established by the "elect," which in this case were the patriots, would be punished; and in practice, this punishment meant that the corrupt were to be liquidated.<sup>36</sup>

Two examples of Robespierre in action before the Convention must suffice to demonstrate the fact that he was preoccupied with the ideal of establishing the reign of virtue in France and exterminating all those who refused to reform their lives and become virtuous citizens of the Republic. On December 25, 1793, in an effort to forestall the increasing uneasiness of some members of the Convention, Robespierre insisted that revolutionary government must be maintained against the attacks of those who advocated moderation as well as those who proposed excess. In defense of his program Robespierre insisted that the reign of virtue had not yet been accomplished, and virtue is the measure of success in building the Republic. In his eyes the true defenders of the republic are virtuous men, and those who oppose it in any way are corrupt. True republicans boast of virtues that are simple, modest, poor, often ignorant, sometimes gross, while the enemies of the republic manifest vices which are surrounded by all wealth, ornamented with the charms of voluptuousness and with all the enticements of perfidy.<sup>37</sup> In concluding the speaker asked the Convention to authorize the Committee of Public Safety to devise changes which would tend to render the action of justice equitable, still more propitious to innocence, and at the same time, more inevitable for crime and intrigue.<sup>38</sup>

Encouraged by the reaction of the members of the Convention to the promise to rid France of corrupt enemies, Robespierre outlined his campaign in more detail. As yet, the republic was

<sup>35</sup> James Mathew Thompson, *Robespierre* (2 vols., New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936), 588.

<sup>36</sup> *Moniteur*, XVIII, 597.

<sup>37</sup> *Moniteur*, XIX, 52.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

not prosecuting its enemies with sufficient vigor. In the speech of February 5, 1794, the spokesman for the Committee of Public Safety insisted that it was necessary to remake France by a complete reformation of her citizens; this reformation would be effected by restoring morality to a place of prime importance. Inspired by his own dream of a triumphant and virtuous France, Robespierre insisted that all the virtues and miracles of the republic must be substituted for all the vices and puerilities of the monarchy.<sup>39</sup> The inspiration that was Robespierre's in this February speech is remarkable. Time and time again, he reiterated the principles of his ideal republic, a republic in which virtue was to be the touch-stone. Here in rather free translation are the speaker's own words,

Hence all that tends to arouse love of country, to purify morals, elevate souls, to direct the passions of the human heart toward the public interest, ought to be adopted or established by you; all that tends to concentrate them in the abjection of the personal *ego*, to reawaken the taste for little things and contempt for great things, ought to be rejected or repressed by you. In the system of the French Revolution, that which is immoral is bad policy, that which corrupts is against the Revolution. Weakness, vices, prejudices, are the way of royalty. Dragged along too often by the weight of our ancient habits, as well as by the insensible tendency of human weakness toward false ideas and cowardly sentiments, we must rather defend ourselves from the excess of weakness than from the excess of energy. Perhaps the greatest pitfall that we must avoid is not the fervor of zeal but rather the lassitude of the good and the fear of our own courage.<sup>40</sup>

As the speaker pictured France to himself he saw that there was still too much corruption, too much ambition to profit from the great upheaval of the revolution, too little interest in the effort to establish the reign of virtue. Such a France was an intolerable place for virtuous men, and something must be done to rid the country of the corrupt and the indifferent. As Robespierre expounded his theory of the Terror, he must have been moved, though unconsciously, by that *dictum* of the Puritan divine, Richard Baxter, who had said that holiness must have the principal honor and encouragement, and a great difference must be made between the precious and the vile.<sup>41</sup> In the eyes

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>40</sup> *Moniteur*, XIX, 403.

<sup>41</sup> Baxter, *op. cit.*, 215.



of the spokesman for the Committee of Public Safety the government had not yet proved itself worthy of true virtuous Frenchmen; to be able to do so, the members of the government must be given even more power. Why? The reason was set forth in unequivocal terms by the speaker when he said that in time of revolution the source of strength and energy in popular government is both virtue and terror; and, he continued, "virtue, without which intimidation is harmful; intimidation, without which virtue is powerless;" then the speaker concluded with these ominous words, "intimidation is nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice; therefore, it is an emanation of virtue . . ." <sup>42</sup>

It is impossible to attempt here a complete analysis of Robespierre's ideas. But from what has been discussed it should seem clear that there are certain similarities between Robespierre's ideas and those of the Puritans. For example, the Incorruptible agreed with the Puritans in dividing mankind into two groups; for the Puritan the division was between the "elect" and the reprobate; for Robespierre it was the virtuous citizen and the corrupt agent of counter-revolution; there was no room in either system for the indifferent. The Incorruptible agreed, too, with that principle set down by Calvin that magistrates are constituted the protectors and vindicators of the public innocence, modesty, probity, and tranquillity. <sup>43</sup> The Terror, in practice was not only aimed at aristocrats and manifest traitors; it was also directed against those who endangered the morals of the young men of France. In bringing such people to justice, the terrorists were guided by the same principle which had been enunciated by John Calvin, namely, "to avenge the afflictions of the righteous at the command of God, is neither to hurt nor to destroy." <sup>44</sup> Baxter had expounded essentially the same principle when he insisted that the security of the nation required that the militia be in honest, faithful, obedient, and valiant hands, which can be assured by supplying every vacant place with godly, valiant men, and weeding out the ungodly and seditious. <sup>45</sup> Robespierre's essential agreement with these conclusions was summed up in his own words, "to punish the oppressors of mankind is mercy; to pardon them is barbarity." <sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Moniteur* XIX, 404.

<sup>43</sup> Calvin, *op. cit.*, IV, 20, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Calvin, *op. cit.*, IV, 20, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Baxter, *op. cit.*, 264.

<sup>46</sup> *Moniteur*, XIX, 405.

Since we have considered the attempt on the part of the Jacobins to establish the Republic of Virtue to be similar to the attempt of the Puritans to set up the holy community, it will help to call attention to a rather recent analysis of this Puritan phase of activity. Ralph Barton Perry evidently was struck by the effort of the Puritans to maintain the holy community at all costs. In developing his ideas Perry, without intending it, presents an excellent description of what was going on in France from September, 1793 to July, 1794. If one conjures up the picture of Robespierre and his cohorts working for the establishment of the Republic of Virtue he will agree that the following description of the Puritan attempt to establish the holy community fits perfectly as a description of what was taking place in France when the Jacobins were trying to make that country virtuous by means of terror. Perry writes,

It is necessary that the remnant of the faithful should lash itself into fury, and then keep itself and the community at large at a high pitch of crusading enthusiasm by perpetual excitation, and by the periodically sounding a tocsin of alarm—even *imagining or creating dangers where they do not exist* [emphasis supplied]—in order to stimulate a mentality of war. It is necessary to suppress dissent with a methodical violence proportional to its extent, so that prosecution becomes persecution. In order to nip opposition in the bud, it is necessary to employ constant vigilance; in other words, a secret police, which creates a pervasive condition of mutual distrust. The party itself must by recurrent 'purges' keep its purity uncorrupted, lest the salt lose its savor. And in proportion as this effort is successful, what is the result? The state is not a means of giving effect to a genuine agreement or sober consciousness of community interest, but an oligarchy in which a ruling class derives a specious appearance of general support from an admixture of hysteria with sullen conformity.<sup>47</sup>

What transpired in France during the months from February to July, 1794, is well known to every student of the revolution. March and April witnessed the destruction of the factions, the Hébertists and the Dantonists, not only because they threatened the political control of the simon pure Jacobins, but because, in the words of Robespierre's confrere, Louis Antoine de Saint-Just, "it is time to make war on unchecked corruption, to make a duty

<sup>47</sup> Ralph Barton Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1944), 344.



of economy, of modesty, of civic virtues, and to annihilate the enemies of the people who flatter the vices and passions of corrupt men in order to create parties, . . .”<sup>48</sup> With the removal of the Dantonists the tempo of the Terror was accelerated until the number of executions for both April and May were higher than those for any preceding month except December of 1793, and January, 1794.<sup>49</sup> It is true, that a statistical study of the incidence of the Terror yields little evidence that men were executed for those crimes which Robespierre abhorred. However, it is very interesting to note that the study of the incidence of the Terror led its author to the conclusion that the Terror is better understood in the light of the psychology of the minority that governed France, a minority which held the very dangerous belief that it was possible to create, by means of political changes, a terrestrial paradise.<sup>50</sup>

It is true that there is a basic difference between the faith of the Puritans and that of those men who endeavored to build the Republic of Virtue. The Puritan's faith was one founded on the Bible, especially the Old Testament; that of the French revolutionary was founded on rationalism and the dream of an all-powerful France in which all citizens would be virtuous. The Puritan seems to have endeavored to build his holy community with the idea that it would be a stepping-stone to the eternal bliss to which he had been chosen; while the revolutionary of 1794 was content with the rather vague belief that he would have fulfilled his destiny if he did all in his power to help bring about the reign of virtue in a regenerated France.

A study of this nature must necessarily leave many questions unanswered. Yet, it seems fair to conclude that the study of the way of life and the habit of mind of the men who for a time controlled the destinies of the French Revolution at its height shows a great deal of resemblance to the Puritans who went before them. There is the same sharp distinction of mankind into two completely separate classes. For the revolutionary the true patriot is as much one of the “elect” as Calvin himself; the principal difference being that Calvin's “elect” were sure of heaven, whereas, the true patriot was sure of his heavenly city in a victorious and virtuous France. Those who opposed the

<sup>48</sup> *Moniteur*, XIX, 686.

<sup>49</sup> Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror During the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), 116.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

builders of the Republic of Virtue were considered just as obstinate and perverse as the reprobate at whom the Puritan railed; the reprobate who was to be made to conform to the Puritan code of conduct or be exiled and in some cases exterminated.

In both the ideal France which was the dream of the revolutionary and the Puritan's City of God there was the same everlasting insistence on virtuous living; the virtues insisted on were the same in both societies, namely, reverence—for God and magistrates in the one society, for the fatherland and magistrates in the other—chastity, sobriety, frugality, industry, and honesty. The true patriot, like the Puritan, could not waste his substance in enjoying leisure and the good things of life; he must ever be alert to do all in his power to better his own condition and that of his country. The tirelessness, the austerity, the lack of humor and anything resembling gentleness is evident on every page of the history of the Committee of Public Safety while its members were busy building the Republic of Virtue. It is true that the morality which these men preached was a morality divorced from religion, but for that very reason it was the more austere. The picture which Robespierre presented of the ideal republican is much the same as the picture of the true disciple of Calvin in Geneva.



## OBSERVATIONS ON RECENT AMERICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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The presidential addresses of the American Historical Association, delivered at the annual convention and printed in the January issue of the *Review*, are a fairly sound clue to the temper of American historians and the tenor of American historiography. The office of president is usually bestowed on a member of the Association who is recognized as an outstanding historian by his colleagues, even though they had little say in the selection and would quite probably prefer another. Not all outstanding American historians are honored with the office, but those who are so honored have a solid claim to prominence in the field of history. The president is usually a historian with many years of experience in the classroom, has a number of publications to his credit, has reached, or is approaching, the status of professor emeritus, and quite likely will soon have a volume of essays written by his former students and dedicated to his retirement. He is in the position to speak much more freely than an assistant professor seeking tenure.

The office, the occasion and tradition have combined to make the presidential address a serious, scholarly and frequently candid discussion on the needs and deficiencies of historical writing, on the nature of history and the function of the historians, on the importance of an interpretation of history and the errors of some schools of interpretation and of some historians. Strictures on any particular historian are, however, usually post-mortem in the literal sense. Historians know the advantages of diplomacy.

This paper is an examination of the six presidential addresses given since the defeat of Hitler and the emergence of the cold war between communistic totalitarianism and the free nations of the West. The objective of the examinations is simple enough. Each president, we may safely assume, gave serious thought to the selection of a topic for his address; the topic finally selected was of deep concern to him and one with which he hoped his colleagues were or would be concerned. On this assumption the presidential addresses warrant the attention of all who are devoted to the study of history and the work of education, and it is natural enough to inquire what were the seasoned views of these

high ranking historians. Were they satisfied with what was being done by their guild and the methods of doing it? Did they take the occasion to warn their colleagues of harmful trends?

Since the addresses are available for all in the *Review* and many have read them, a brief statement of the salient ideas of each will suffice here. Those who have read them will remember, and those who make much of geographical influences will like to be reminded, that all six addresses were given by historians connected with large eastern universities: Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania.

The influence of the frontier hypothesis on American historiography was the concern of both Carlton J. H. Hayes and Thomas J. Wertenbaker.<sup>1</sup> There was no denying, of course, the importance of the frontier in American history; it had, however, been accepted hastily and without careful scrutiny as the key to American history, and it had been overemphasized. It was one of the factors in the making of American institutions, but not the only one; it was one of many, and not the most important one. Our language, religion, ideals of liberty, political institutions, social customs, architecture, crafts, agricultural methods—our civilization—were and are a heritage from Europe, in particular, the heritage of the civilization of the Atlantic community. The transit of culture was to the frontier, not from the frontier. Hayes pointed out how this exclusive concern with the frontier as the key to American history had resulted in a neglect of European history in the professional training of American historians and in the growth of intellectual isolationism, and had ill prepared this nation to defend civilization on which it had mentally turned its back. Wertenbaker was more concerned with the transit of the civilizations of the original colonies and eastern States, planted by the forces of inheritance, continual contact with the original source, local conditions, and the melting plot, to the West. The pattern for the molding of the West will be found on the Atlantic seaboard. Yet this same exclusive concern with the frontier has so ignored the transplanting of the eastern civilization to the West that it has become "one of the most neglected" fields in American historiography.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carlton J. H. Hayes, "The American Frontier—Frontier of What?", *American Historical Review*, LI (January, 1946), 199-216; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, "The Molding of the Middle West," *ibid.*, LIII (January, 1948), 223-234.

<sup>2</sup> Wertenbaker, *op. cit.*, p. 225.



Sidney B. Fay appraised the once popular idea of progress in the light of events since 1900. The idea that progress was constant, automatic, and inevitable in accordance with cosmic laws had had a firm grip on American minds, prominent historians included, during the second half of the nineteenth century; so firm was the hold, the idea of progress was "assumed as the animating and controlling force in our western civilization."<sup>3</sup> Such was the impact of social darwinism on America. By chance or design Fay passed judgment on the idea of progress just a half century after John Bach McMaster, one of the major historians of his day, had measured the progress in America since 1800. He wrote the article, "A Century of Social Betterment," for the *Atlantic Monthly*.<sup>4</sup> What he said was quite true, but the tone of the article was panegyric on the Machine that had, while lightening the burdens of man, increased man's capacity for bodily comfort. It was written with the optimism so characteristic of those years. Not many were surprised at or demurred to Fay's statement that the events since the turn of the century had struck a crushing blow to this idea. It was, in the first place, "logically meaningless," and such ideas make very poor assumptions. It seems to me that the real contribution of this address is inferential. Fay traced the origin and growth of the idea of progress, and one can see that the idea took root in the sixteenth century and developed *pari passu* with the rejection of the supernatural, the repudiation of Divine Providence, the weakening of Christianity, the acceptance of man's perfectibility on this earth, a growing confusion about the real nature of man, the apotheosis of man's autonomy, and the rapid strides in the physical sciences. The idea, then, filled a mental vacuum created by the retreat from Christianity.

Two years after this autopsy on the idea of progress Kenneth Scott Latourette invited his colleagues to consider one of the oldest interpretations of history: the Christian interpretation. "History cannot be written," he reminded them, "without some basis of selection, whether artificial and purely subjective or inherent in man's history."<sup>5</sup> It is a rare and pleasant sight to see the pages of the *American Historical Review* with footnote references to the Old and New Testaments, to the four Gospels

<sup>3</sup> "The Idea of Progress," *American Historical Review*, LII (January, 1947), 232. The emphasis has been added.

<sup>4</sup> LXXIX (January, 1897), 20-27.

<sup>5</sup> "The Christian Understanding of History," *American Historical Review*, LIV (January, 1949), 261.

and the Acts, and to St. Paul's Letters to the Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians,—twenty-five references in all. And it is a revealing insight into the controlling attitudes of many American historians that Professor Latourette did not feel he could presume that his audience had a sufficient understanding of the basic ideas of the Christian interpretation of history. He had to explain it to them. No president of the association ever had to explain to the members any of the deterministic interpretations of history, be it racial, geographical, economic or any other kind that belittled or denied the part of man in history. But in the year 1948 A. D. the Christian interpretation of history, the interpretation that recognizes that "the individual is of outstanding importance,"<sup>6</sup> had to be unfolded, expounded, and annotated for the benefit of American historians. Historians of the main currents of American thought should take note of this address.

The social responsibility of the historians was the theme of Conyers Read's address. He found that the teaching of history on the undergraduate level had been neglected in favor of the few who aspired to graduate work and in favor of publications. Historians must pay more attention to their responsibility of interpreting the past to the present generation, and to do this they could no longer assume, as they once did, an air of neutrality towards the main issues of life. History must be taught with reference to living, with the historian first recognizing certain fundamental values as beyond dispute. Hence, he thought that "the first prerequisite of a historian is a sound social philosophy."<sup>7</sup> It is clear from the address that Read was disturbed by the threat to our survival from Hitler, Mussolini, and now Stalin. It appears rather obvious too that the address raised and left unanswered many questions. What "values" are fundamental and beyond dispute? Why an act of faith "in the validity of our democratic assumptions?" What kind of history results when one admits that the historian "selects and arranges and emphasizes his factual data with reference to some pattern in his mind, some concept of what is socially desirable, and he follows the evolution of society with constant reference to that objective?"<sup>8</sup>

Fortunately, and it could well be designedly, Samuel E. Morison answered some of these questions. Clearly, convincingly, and

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>7</sup> "The Social Responsibilities of the Historians," *American Historical Review*, LV (January, 1950), 285.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.



repeatedly he reminded the members of the association what their primary responsibility as historians was. Their task was "to illuminate the past for their hearers or readers," and to present "a corpus of ascertained fact." The fundamental question before the historian as he explores past actuality was: "What actually happened, and why?" Morison admitted that in presenting a corpus of ascertained facts there must be selection, emphasis, and arrangement of facts, and he recognized that the historian's philosophy of history influenced the selection, the emphasis, and the arrangement of facts. But he severely chided those who, repudiating the primary responsibility of the historian, professed that it was neither possible nor desirable to describe the past as it actually happened and asserted that the historian's primary function was so to select and arrange the facts of the past as to direct the present and the future towards what the historian considers highly desirable goals. As an example he used the methods, the frame of reference, and the writings of Charles A. Beard, a former president of the association. Morison admitted he was skating on thin ice in so addressing the guild. It was time that someone took the risk. His parting advice was also a departure; he suggested that his colleagues seek divine guidance in their work and recommended a few verses from St. Paul and Aquinas' prayer for scholars.

The historian will find food for thought in these six presidential addresses, and he will find fault with some of the remarks. I would like to stress some of the features that appealed to me.

It is encouraging to find the qualifications and the primary task of historians so clearly and emphatically stated. No person "can be a great or even a good historian" without "an inherent loyalty to truth, a sense of balance, and a high degree of intellectual honesty." And his basic task: "one of presenting a corpus of ascertained fact."<sup>10</sup> This plain but by no means simple task has been obscured, as Morison observes, by an overstress in recent years on the limitations of scientific objectivity, by an education that has implied that the historian's problem is a description of trends and a comparison of points of views, and by a claim that the historian's vocation is to influence the future by directing the present trend of events. Influencing the future is, at best, secondary and derivative. His main function, to repeat

<sup>9</sup> "Faith of a Historian," *American Historical Review*, LVI (January, 1951), 264, 263.

<sup>10</sup> Morison, *op. cit.*, pp. 262, 263.

Morison again, is to describe events simply as they happened, and then to understand the motives and objects of the persons involved, individually and collectively, as impartially as he is able.<sup>11</sup>

This vocation of the historian was stated in similar words by another able historian at about the same time. The proper task of the historian, wrote Ross J. S. Hoffman, is:

to probe into and verify by every possible means the experience of mankind so that by seeing themselves in one dimension more men may gain a better understanding of what kind of creatures God fashioned them to be. History is not a 'march of time' panorama of progress from the amoeba to the world state; the generations of men are not enslaved in the service of some emergent ultimate pattern for the life of a race.<sup>12</sup>

Next, is the preoccupation of these prominent historians with the need and the influence of a philosophy of history. One of the addresses, as has been noted, was entirely devoted to the exposition of the Christian understanding of history; others bore witness to the influence of a philosophy on what the historian said and wrote.

"History cannot be written," observed Professor Latourette, "without some basis of selection, whether artificial and purely subjective or inherent in man's story."<sup>13</sup> After enumerating a variety of "purpose which have governed" historians at various times in the selection of significant facts, he posed the inevitable dilemma:

On the one hand he is painfully aware of the many interpretations and philosophies of history which have been put forward and is therefore hesitant to accept wholeheartedly any one of them. On the other hand he is confronted with the necessity of acting on some principle of selection, even though it be arbitrary, and is haunted by the persistent hope that a framework and meaning can be found which possess objective reality.<sup>14</sup>

Conyers Read also asserted that historical writings cannot escape the influence of the historian's philosophy of man. The difficulties begin to appear.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>12</sup> In a book review of *Christianity and History* by Herbert Butterfield (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1950), in the *Catholic Historical Review*, XXXVI (January, 1951), 450.

<sup>13</sup> Latourette, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*

when as historians we attempt the synthesis; and, contrary to widespread opinion, this is an act which most of us habitually perform not in books but in classrooms, from the primary grades to postgraduate courses. There by selection, arrangement, and particularly by emphasis we impose the pattern. It is idle to deny that the pattern we impose is profoundly influenced not only by our personal idiosyncrasies but by the whole climate of opinion in which we live. . . . It makes a lot of difference whether the historian approaches the past as a Christian zealot or as a skeptic, or as a good Whig or as a good Socialist. . . .

Are we, for example, mere implementations of biological urges destined to no more significant end than the banquet chamber of the earthworms, or are we divinely created in accordance with a divine purpose and containing within ourselves the potentialities of eternal life? Our answer to this question will have a profound influence upon our personal and social behavior. At this point history impinges very definitely upon the basic problems of modern society.<sup>15</sup>

Morison, too, makes it clear that the historian's sense of values influence the selection and arrangement of facts. It goes without saying, he told his audience, that:

complete, "scientific" objectivity is unattainable by the historian. His "choice of facts to be recorded, his distribution of emphasis among them, his sense of their significance and relative proportion, must be governed by his philosophy of life."<sup>16</sup>

It is quite obvious that there is agreement here on the importance of a philosophy of history; one would like to think that there was a growing recognition that a false philosophy produces false history. At least, one can find in these addresses a repudiation of or a warning against some of the once popular philosophies and assumptions of American historians.

However, recognition of the importance of a philosophy of history is only the preface to the problem. The historian is no more free to embrace any kind of philosophy than is a geographer free to assume that the earth is of this or that shape. He is not free to flip a coin to decide whether men are "mere implementations of biological urges" or "divinely created in accordance with a divine purpose." His responsibility is to know what man is

<sup>15</sup> Read, *op. cit.*, pp. 280, 281.

<sup>16</sup> Morison, *op. cit.*, p. 263, quoting F. M. Cornford, *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays*, p. 1.



before he investigates the past activities of man. And this brings us to the major weakness of American historians and historiography: a hasty and uncritical acceptance of a variety of philosophies. One generation embraces the racial interpretation of history; the next generation abandons it to embrace the frontier interpretation; the third generation discards the frontier theory in favor of the economic interpretation.

The historian's philosophy of history is his understanding of man: his origin, his nature, his innate capacities, his freedom and necessities, his destiny. This understanding is not derived from a study of the past, for the historian is not equipped with the tools to probe the ultimates. "Philosophy must be brought to history, it cannot be extracted from it."<sup>17</sup> The study of man in the past may and should illuminate and illustrate the historian's philosophy, but his understanding of man must be derived from the sciences that study man, and not, as so frequently happens, from the physical sciences. The nature of atoms do not explain the nature of man. A sound philosophy of history is derived, then, from theology, psychology, logic, ethics, cosmology, sciences that study the nature, faculties, activities, and habitat of man. The historian, as an intelligent and intellectually honest student, must master these sciences.

What, then, is a practical test of any sound philosophy of history? It must be one that does not distort the past and your knowledge of the past; one that does not control and determine your selection, arrangement, and emphasis of factual data so that the past fits a pattern; one that does not interfere with and frustrate the primary function of the historian, i. e. presents a corpus of ascertained facts; one that does not put a question mark after your intellectual honesty. Granting the personal element in interpretation and the influence of philosophy on the synthesis, it is a travesty to say, as one has said, "that every historian abandons objectivity as soon as he selects facts for presentation."<sup>18</sup>

This simple test should compel many historians to re-examine their assumptions and the philosophies that dictate the assumptions. Take, for instance, the historians, and there are many, who assume the absolute uniformity of nature. This assumption

<sup>17</sup> G. M. Trevelyn, "Stray Thoughts on History," in *An Autobiography and Other Essays* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), p. 82.

<sup>18</sup> Ralph Ray Fahrney, "Edward Channing," in *The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography*, ed. by Wm. T. Hutchinson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 302.

obliges them to deny the possibility of miracles, to ignore the supernatural, and to shun the Christian interpretation of history. But it also compels them to deny *a priori* some historical facts,—any historical fact, proven like other historical facts, when and if it is contrary to the uniformity of nature.

A fair statement of this assumption will be found in a review of *A Guide to Historical Method*, a work of the late Gilbert J. Garraghan which explains and maintains the Christian philosophy of history. The reviewer, however, took exception to this philosophy and contended that:

Most historians will probably continue to be content with the "rationalistic" method, assuming, like the natural scientist, the uniformity of nature and accepting the limitations of the assumption. The method is agnostic only in that it employs a philosophy, or hypothesis, consistent with this assumption. The assumption does not imply the rejection of theism as a matter of personal faith, but only that historians are not provided with tools adequate for dealing with ultimates.<sup>19</sup>

Note what is freely admitted in this statement. The philosophy of history is dictated by and made consistent with an assumption. The historian is absolved from dealing with ultimates because he has no adequate tools, but the assumption is borrowed from the natural scientists who have no adequate tools either. The historian can profess theism and the full implications of theism in his private life, but must discard it when he is writing history; he must lead a double intellectual life. When the historian is faced with a historical fact which is not in conformity with the physical laws of nature, he must deny the fact, he must question the tools of a historian, tools that are adequate to establish historical facts. He must never question his assumption. He must be ready to deny *a priori* some kinds of historical facts. It is rather difficult to see what is rational about accepting assumptions that compel historians to ignore ultimates and so to deny *a priori* some historical facts. Why should historians be willing to admit the supernatural as a factor in their personal lives but be so determined to deny it as factor in the history of man? I think Harold W. Dodds, president of Princeton University, gave the answer in his baccalaureate address to the graduating class of Princeton this June. He told them that:

The basic cause of man's anxiety today stems from a

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<sup>19</sup> Homer C. Hockett, *American Historical Review*, LII (July, 1947), 764.

conflict between man's need for the supernatural and his stubborn unwillingness to accept it.<sup>20</sup>

Historians share a responsibility for this anxiety.

Now let us look at one of the questions raised by Conyers Read. Few will deny that a historian should have a "sound social philosophy." Indeed, not only his social but his whole philosophy of life should be sound. But should this social philosophy control and determine the selection of factual data? Read concedes that it will and that it should.

Actually the historian finds in the past what he looks for in the past. He selects and arranges and emphasizes his factual data with reference to some pattern in his mind, some concept of what is socially desirable, and he follows the evolution of society with constant reference to that objective. Growth becomes for him movement toward it; decay, movement away from it. And of course, by implication, the curve which he plots for the past inevitably projects itself into the future.<sup>21</sup>

If I have read Morison correctly that is just what he is condemning Beard for doing, and rightly so. When the historian makes the past fit a pattern, he has abandoned his primary function and has turned his back on his first responsibility. Beard thought he had a sound social philosophy and he considered it his responsibility so to select and arrange the facts of history as to influence the present and the future in the direction he considered socially desirable. The desired direction was a collectivist democracy. And Morison expressed the wish that every young historian would read Beard's final book "as an example of what happens when a historian consciously writes to shape the future instead of to illuminate the past; of a man becoming the victim or the prisoner of his 'frame of reference.'"<sup>22</sup> It would seem that Morison's criticism of Beard also holds for Read. Sound social philosophy or not, Read's methods will produce false history.

There are many other seasoned estimates and observations in these presidential addresses that should be underscored. Perhaps they will be helpful to the younger historians; one gets the impression that they were directed at them. For these younger people should be interested in the transit of the eastern civilizations to the West, a field neglected because of the over-emphasis

<sup>20</sup> *The New York Times*, June 11, 1951, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Read, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

<sup>22</sup> Morison, *op. cit.*, p. 267.



on the frontier as the factor in the moulding of the West. Indirectly at least, they have been asked to examine more closely their assumptions, for most of the addresses have examined one or the other of the "assumptions" accepted by our predecessors and they have been found wanting. They could well afford to examine more closely the Christian interpretation of history, as Professor Latourette invited them to do. It provides the historian "with an absolute criterion" of values, it acknowledges the freedom of man's will in the making of history, and it recognizes the "outstanding importance" of the individual in society.<sup>23</sup>

In his baccalaureate address to the Yale graduating class this past June Dr. A. Whitney Griswold, president of Yale, urged the seniors to reject the prevailing philosophy that the individual had little control over his future.<sup>24</sup> As a historian Dr. Griswold knows that, ever since Herbert B. Adams and John W. Burgess inaugurated graduate studies in history and political science at Johns Hopkins and Columbia, the prevailing philosophy behind American historiography has conceded to the individual little control over the future. The trend has been away from the Christian understanding of history and a leaning toward a deterministic philosophy, racial, geographical, economic, or a combination of them, each of which denied or belittled the part man played in history and made him a robot or an automaton.<sup>25</sup> In as many words, Dr. Griswold was asking the historians as well as the seniors of Yale to reject philosophies that belittle the individual.

On the same day the presidents of two large eastern universities told their graduating classes to face up to the fact of man's need for the supernatural and to hold fast to a philosophy that respected the individual and the individual's control of the future. It is timely advice for historians, too.

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<sup>23</sup> Latourette, *op. cit.*, pp. 270, 268, 275.

<sup>24</sup> *The New York Times*, June 11, 1951, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> See writer's article, "The Philosophy of History of American Historians," *The Historical Bulletin*, XXVII (March, 1949), 51, sq.

## TWO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF JOHN COCHLAEUS

BY H. E. ROPE\*

In the archives of the English College at Rome are two autograph letters of John Cochlaeus, dated 1529 and 1531, to King Henry VIII and St. Thomas More, of which neither seems to have been printed.<sup>1</sup>

Johann Dobeneck was born at Wendelstein, whence he took his Renaissance surname, near Schwabach in Upper Bavaria, in 1479, one year after England's martyred Chancellor. After studying at Nuremberg and, from 1504, at Cologne, he was made Rector of St. Lawrence Latin School of the former town in 1510; there he wrote his *Quadrivium Grammatices* (1511) and *Tetrachordum Musices*, and became a friend of the humanist Willibald Perkheimer, with whose three nephews he went to Bologna to pursue his legal, humanistic, and theological studies, and thence by the same friend's counsel to Rome, where he was greatly impressed by the Oratorio del Divino Amore, and was ordained priest. Returning to Germany a Doctor of Divinity, he was persuaded to take the field as an apologist against Luther. His *De Utroque Sacerdotio* appeared in 1520, followed by *De Gratia Sacramentorum* (1522), and *De Baptismo Parvulorum* (1523). In 1521 he met the Nuncio Aleander at Worms and aided his efforts for Luther's reconciliation. In his *De Christi Natura* (1527) and another work he wrote against the 'Bible only' principle by disproving the Divinity of Christ from Bible texts, a

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<sup>1</sup> I can see no reason for doubting their authenticity, no conceivable motive for their forgery. The writing and paper are clearly of the time indicated, and both are in the same hand, albeit two added years of labour have made the later one less distinct, as is the way with busy penmen. The endorsement "Ex Dresda Misne 1529 Cochleus," in a large contemporary hand, seems to be Henry's own. They are in perfect accord with all we know of the writer and recipients, and contain inside information about the family of Cochlaeus and conditions in Germany. Archivists of the 17th and later centuries accepted them as genuine. The watermark of the first is a wide-mouthed eel-like fish, of the second a shield. There is no record as to how they came to the English College, but one may well conjecture that the King handed over the first to St. Thomas More to answer, and the More family after his martyrdom conveyed both to Cardinal Pole who, as warden of the English Hospice, gave them to its archives.

daring but perhaps ill-advised method of showing that "the devil can quote Scripture for his purpose." In 1526 he accompanied Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg to the Diet of Speyer. Besides many pamphlets and smaller pieces Cochlaeus wrote a *Commentaria de Actis et Scriptis M. Lutheri* of great and abiding service, a full and valuable *Historiae Hussitarum Libri XII* and *Speculum Antiquae Devotionis Circa Missam*, all published in 1549. Cochlaeus was eminent among the reporters of the Augsburg Confession in 1530. Religious and political revolutions drove him in turn from Nuremberg, Frankfurt and Dresden. In 1526 he became Canon of Mainz and in 1539 of Breslau. In 1527 he succeeded Emser as secretary to the devout Catholic Duke George of Saxony, whom he loyally defended from Luther's slanders. The duke was succeeded by his apostate brother Heinrich in 1539, whereon Cochlaeus fled from Dresden. His last years were passed between Eichstätt, Mainz, and Breslau, where he died on January 11th, 1552.

John Cochlaeus is generally counted second only to Eck among the group of eminent Catholic apologists in Germany during the Lutheran Revolution. Less calm and judicial in temper than Eck, he is outstanding as a discriminating and conscientious historian, thoroughly conversant with his subject and a diligent searcher of original, especially handwritten, sources; he is indeed a path-breaker in research history, and receives tribute as such from Janssen.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 1904, VII, 314-315.

Among the first to give him due appreciation was Cardinal Pole, who wrote to him from Carpentras in 1539: "Si hactenus tuis literis, quas [recepi] superioribus mensibus Romae, una cum libello tuo, in quo responsio ad Sturmii librum continebatur [*Æquitatis discussio contra epistolam Joan. Sturmii de VII pro concilio deputatis*, 1539. This Epistle of Sturmius (Jacob Sturm) had been Englished by Richard Moryson in 1537.] non responderim, non illud quidem in causa existimare debes, quod vel tui oblitus fuerim, vel quod non gratissimae mihi fuerint tuae literae una cum libro, qui jam a multis annis mihi in visceribus haesisti, ac licet de facie ignotum, te tamen jam diu amo, scriptaque tua talia semper judicavi, quae non solum grata his, qui doctrinae et pietati favent, esse debuerunt, sed praemiis maximis ab illis prosequenda sunt, cum tu unus inprimis impetum adversariorum in istis locis, ubi maximum ab illis periculum imminebat, jam multis annis sustinuisti. Neque enim hunc solum adversus Sturmium librum tuum legi, in quo inanem illius verborum strepitum solida sensuum veritate facile comprimis . . . verum, ut dixi, non hunc librum tuum legi solum: sed cum nonnullos alios, tum illum, qui mihi maxime carum te reddere deberet, in quo contra Pharaonis Angliae impiam crude-



The letter to Henry VIII is dated August 26, 1529, and written from Dresden:

"Serenissime Princeps, Rex armis iuxta literisque insignis,

"Domine Clementissime, Si per Clementiam tuam phas est, tantum Regem ab homine plebeio salutari, Maiestatem tuam supplex puro corde animoque non ficto deuote saluto, veniamque huic ausui meo precor. Et ne longis importunius obstrepam ineptiis, mentem meam paucis accipe. Jam quartus labitur annus, posteaquam priuatim ad Maiestatem Tuam ex Colonia Agripina scripsi de Nouo Testamento, a Luthero deprauato, at ab Apostatis Anglis in linguam patriam traducto Calcographisque tradito, ut clam in Angliam importarentur mox primo conatu Exemplariorum Tria Milia. Deinde paulo post publice nuncupauī eidem Maiestati Tuae XII Libros Ruperti Tuitiensis in Apocalypsim, quibus adiunxi et alia quaedam illius Opuscula, quae omnia in vnum volumen compacta transmisi per quendam Maiestati Tuae bene notum. Sed vltra biennium post haesitauī, num aliquid meorum Maiestati Tuae vnquam sit redditum, donec ex Magistro Angliae Barone Domino Thoma Moro A consiliis Maiestatis Tuae intellexi tandem, nihil redditum esse.

"Scripseram et in Captiuitatem Babylonicam tres Libros de Eucharistia," eodem (ni fallor) tempore quo scripsit Maiestas Tua Nempe priusquam Vuormaciam in Caesaris conspectum

litatem, pietatis jacula fortiter torsisti. Quare, mihi non potuisti non esse carissimus, primum quidem ob eandem causam, propter quam omnibus piis et Catholicis viris, quorum causam agis, merito es carus; deinde Patriae causa, cujus protectionem contra illius salutis et libertatis oppressorem, suscepisti; adeo ut nemo mihi carior esse debeat. Quid ergo est, quod nihil tuis literis responderim? Hoc quidem in causa fuit, quod in illud tempus inciderunt, in quo inopinatus quidam casus, ex ejusdem Pharaonis crudelitate natus, me Roma statim in Hispanias arripuit neque postea aliquo in loco con sedi unde commode ad te dare literas possem, donec tandem Carpentoracte pervinissem ad Reverendissimum Carinalem Sadoletum, tui amantissimum, qui eodem tempore abs te literas accepit, e quibus sum admonitus, quod semper in animo habui, simul ac occasio adesset, ut haec ad tuas literas rescriberem. Vidi vero, quae ad eum scripsisti luctus et doloris plena, maxime Reip. causa, ex morte vestri Principis, qua maxime timendum est, quod tu non minus horrescere videris, ne mors doctrinae Catholicae et Fidei in istis locis subsequatur; valde prorsus ingemui cum illa legerem." (*Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli*, pars iii, Brixiae, 1748, pp. 1-2.)

<sup>3</sup> Among the yet unpublished works of Cochlaeus, named in Beham's *Catalogus brevis* (1549) is *In Babylonem Lutheri Apologiae lib. 3.* Also there is a tragedy in German verse listed as *Tragoedia de matrimonio Regis Angliae Rhythmica* and in Latin, *Perspicuae veritatis assertio aduersus falsas et impias adulationes Ricardi Morysini Angli.* Beham's *Catalogus brevis eorum quae contra novas Sectas scripsit Ioannes Cochlaeus* (1549).

venisset Lutherus. Quos certe post aeditam Assertionem tuam, Nomini tuo nuncupatos editurus eram, ad hoc sane potissimum, ut Catholici intelligerent, quam bene consonet verum vero ubique, duce Spiritu sancto Ecclesiae Paraclito, qui eandem veritatem Anglo et Germano, Regi et Plebeio, sese mutuo ignorantibus, caelesti afflatu suggesserit, absque gentium aut personarum acceptione, nisi quod rem eandem eruditius magnificentiusque ac efficacius explorare voluit per Nobilissimum Regem Angliae atque per ignobilem homuncionem Germaniae. Perfidia uero et improbitas Chalcographorum nostratum, opusculum illud meum, licet publice admissum a Censoribus et quidem Argentinae, ante annos quinque, in angulo latitare coegit, ne Assertioni Regiae astipulari videretur. Et tantum de praeteritis.

“Nunc vero Domini Thomae Mori Literis animatus, quaedam Rescripta Regum Gothicae gentis,<sup>4</sup> et Epistolis Cassiodori collecta, Illustrissimae Celsitudini tuae inscripsi, supplici nimirum voto preceque deuota, ut Serenissima Maiestas Tua audaculam hanc meam opellam clementer in bonam parten accipiat. Id si fecerit, bonam certe operam nauabo, ut posthac iustum aliquod volumen Glorae tuae inscribam. Romanorum Consulum seriem, ex eodem Cassiodoro nuncupauit Domino Thomae Moro, quem Maiestati Tuae charissimum esse non dubito. Sed et aliis quibusdam Anglis, qui Regia beneficentia tua sublimati, in me pauperculum benefici fuerunt, nonnullos inscripsi libellos, non ob aliud sane quam gratitudinis ergo: Licet longe indoctior sim, quam ut tantis viris ob eruditionem placere queam sed bonitas eorum non rem, sed animum conatumque meum spectabit. Quod ut tua quoque Maiestas faciat, supplici deuotione oro et obsecro. Bene vale Rex florentissime, Princeps fortunatissime, Domine Clementissime, et hanc temeritatem meam condona bonitati Patroni mei Domini Thomae More, cuius virtutes plurimas vehementer amo et suspicio. Ex Dresda Misnae ad Albim, VII Calendas Septembris, Anno Domini M. D. XXIX.

“Maiestati Tuae Clementissimae

Deuote addictus ex animo, licet

nimis indignus Capellanus

Johannes Cochlaeus.”

<sup>4</sup> In 1544 was published at Ingoldstadt his *Vita Theodorici Regis Gothorum & Italiae historia ex diuersis excerpta Concilium delectorum cardinalium et aliorum de emendenda Ecclesia. Paula III jubente, etc., accessit J. Cochlaei discussio aequitatis super concilio, etc., ad tollendam per generale concilium inter Germanos in religione discordiam.*

"(Postscript) De tumultu apud Heluetios utrumque sedato, credo Maiestatem Tuam iam dudum a Domino Erasmo Roterodamo aut a propriis Oratoribus certior factam. Thomas Murnerus, quem multis olim beneficiis ornauit Maiestas Tua in summo est (si literae non fallunt) discrimine. Vereor equidem, ne in noxam dedatur Tigurinis et Bernensibus, quorum sacrilegia detestatus est.

"Illustrissimus Princeps et Dominus meus Saxoniae Dux Georgius proprium ad Maiestatem Tuam destinavit Oratorem, ex quo planissime intelliget Maiestas Tua quam durum diuturnum nobis Catholicis bellum sit contra sectas nouas, quarum confidentia fretus Lutherus, in meum quoque Principem, licet vicinum et ipsius protectori sanguine proximum, multis conuiciorum plaustris inuehi non veretur. Sed fortior est Dominus meus, quam ut timeat vel Lutheri conuicia vel eius protectoris arma.

"(Address) Inuictissimo Principi ac Domino, Domino Henrico, huius nominis Octauo Angliae & Franciae Regi, Hyberniae Domino, ac fidei Catholicae Defensori, Domino suo Clementissimo."

The letter to St. Thomas More runs as follows:<sup>5</sup>

"Inclyte et Magnifice Domine Cancellarie, Patrone omnium charissime,<sup>6</sup>

"Ad primas literas Magnificentiae Tuae<sup>7</sup> mense Nouembri

<sup>5</sup> Thomas More quickly won the heart of Cochlaeus, whose friendships were little troubled by distance. In his dedicatory letter to the Abbot of Liege, prefixed to Kromer's address to the Synod at Cracow, which he had printed by Beham in 1550, Cochlaeus says: "at uero quod R.D. tua queritur de tam longa inter nos locorum intercapedine, ostendam hoc paruo libello R. Dignitati tuae; nihil esse longum et imperuium Charitati non fictae. Fortis enim est (ait Salomon) ut mors dilectio, & aqua multae non potuerunt extinguere charitatem. Non extinxerunt in corde meo charitatem ueram, qua ardentissime dilexi Episcopum Roffensem, & Thomam Morum Angliae Cancellarium: licet major esset inter nos locorum distantia. Nec obstat amoris meo perpetua maius locorum interuallum, quo non minus in morte quam in uita, optimos & Doctissimos uiros, Amplissimos Cardinales, Campegium, Contarenum Sadoletum, & id genus complures alios dilexi, quorum dulcissima mini semper est memoria." (pp. 3-4).

<sup>6</sup> S in the margin may stand for 'salve'.

<sup>7</sup> Cochlaeus was fond of this form of address. In dedicating his *De Interim Brevis Responsio Ioanni Cochaei, ad prolixum Conuictorum & Calumniarum librum Ioannis Caluini* (1549) to Marillac, the French Ambassador, he writes: "Licet Magnificentiae tuae de facie incognito, hunc qualemcumque libellum Nomini tuo clarissimo nuncupare, tanquam aequissimo inter Fallum et Germanum Cognitori et arbitro."



datas, iampridem priuatim respondi. Respondi et publice nuper in libello paruulo, quem nunc Magnificentiae Tuae transmittō, supplici sane cum prece, ut aequo animo accipias. Minime quidem dignus est libellus (quem raptim, quia subito edendus erat, in nundinis lipsiensibus ex Teuthonico transtuli, propter Anglos praecipue et propter Cardinalem Campegium) ut nomini tuo tam celebri et tanta dignitate praefulgenti nuncupetur, feci tamen id bona profecto intentione, ut Christianum illum pectoris tui candorem quo et pacem Ecclesiae desyderas, et humilitatem meam in tanto dignitatis vertice constitutus non despicias aulico fastu nec dedignaris responso) collaudent apud nos omnes Lutherani iuxta et Catholici. Spero uero nihil in praefatiuncula illa esse, quod ullus hominum possit in te cauillari. Siquid imprudens ibi admisi, quod vel Magnificentiam Tuam vel quemvis alium iure offendere queat, suppliciter abs te veniam precor, quia ex ignorantia factum sit oportet, quum nihil tale intenderim.

“Decreueram apud me, nihil amplius in Lutherum scribere, nisi summam quandam Euangelii eius quam sane in tres discreui partes, quarum vna historiam iuxta annorum seriem contexerit, Altera eius dogmata, Tertia eius sermones populares complecteretur. Vt futuro Consilio (quod Augustus promiserat Caesar) possem quodam compendio, ad redimendam longi temporis disquisitionem summam quandam omnium nequitiarum impietatumque et errorum Lutheranae sectae exhibere. Verum cum pars aduersa non quiescat, cogor et ego (maxime cum perpauca iam sint ex parte nostra qui scribant) illorum malitiae utrumque occurrere. Praesertim vero Teuthonicis libellis, quibus illi potissimum utuntur. Scripsi itaque a reditu ex Augusta contra Consultatores Electoris saxoniae, ad quod Consilium scripsit Lutherus cum Melanchthone et Pomerano. Huic multa alia adieci Teuthonice, contra nouos subinde conatus eorum, et non ego solus, sed et magni quidam hic sub alieno (propter amarulentias Lutheri subterfugiendas) nomine, reddunt fortiter conuictorum talionem Luthero.

“Caeterum Confessionem et Apologiam suam nuper edidit Philippus Melanchthon, tum latine, tum Teuthonice, tanto sane nocentior, quanto est et erroribus densior et verbis modestior, quam libri sunt lutherici. Rogant itaque me plerique, ut ei primo quoque tempore respondeam. Egu uero maxime timeo, ne multos peruertat, etiam in Aulis Regum, anteaquam possit parari responsio. Deinde, tota fere Germania in maligno posita est, maxime quantum ad Chalcographos et Bibliopolas attinet, qui Lutherani sunt fere omnes. Difficile igitur et dispendiosum nobis

est cum eis commercium. Licet eorum opera carere non possimus, sed ipsi eam nobis quam malignissime locant, adeo, ut nescimus, num in scribendo major nobis difficultas sit, an potius in edendo. Nostri Episcopi more suo antiquo minus de literis quam de principatu curant, et in (?) proprietatibus consuetis magnum per Lutheri criminationes patiuntur detrimentum. Nisi igitur aliunde superueniat aliquod subsidii, frustra scripserim, quae edere non potero. Euangelium sane Lutheri bene prolixum erit, sed et de Matrimonio X Quaestiones, et de Orantione et modo orandi duos libros Teuthonice scripsi, haud ita paruo labore, et utrumque opusculum, dato aliquo otio, in latinum versurus essem, siquidem esset edendi spes. Nunc instant mihi, ut Philippo Melanchthoni respondeam. Quod sane perquam necessarium videtur. Vtinam Rosseus vester aut R. D. Episcopus Roffensis hunc Rhetorem digne et pro meritis exipiat. Certe Rosseus et stilo et ingenio longe superior videtur illo. Ego tamen interim curabo ut Philippicas in eum scribam, nec dubito, mihi satis fore argumentorum, si comptior quoque stilus et prompti adesset ingenium. A Magnificentia Tua nihil prorsus peto, nisi gratiam et fauorem antiquum, quo poteris vno verbo citra incommodum tuum commendare me vel Regiae Maiestati vel Episcopis epulentis, quibus non sunt liberi, sicut ex Dei dono sunt Magnificentiae Tuae Vt tenuitatem meam in onere impensarum pio aliquo subsidio releuent, praesertim si indictum fuerit Generale Consilium, ut possim exhibere descriptionem trium partium Euangelii Lutherici.

“Lator praesentium quinque sorores et fratrem vnum habet, omnes orphani, sine patre et matre, liberi sororis meae, quibus me patris vice esse oportet. E quibus sane tres virgines iampridem nobiles existunt. Quarum seniore nuper despondi quidem, sed anxie cogito, quam (?) collocem honeste, quia nuptiae sine impensis fieri non possunt. Ignosce obsecro mihi, qui a prolixis nugis literarum et grandi nouitatum fuscinulo Magisterium Tuum grauare non cesso. Ignosce precor. Non vero peto ut Magnificentia Tua in ijs prolixius occupetur, sed ut per M.T. alijs, quibus plus otij est, communicetur. Maxime vero commendo pietati tuae hunc nepotem meum, ut isthic in famulatu aliquo permanere queat. Posset profecto cum tempore Magnificentia Tua usui fore in scribendo, posteaquam linguam vestram scribendi stylum melius acceperit. Mihi uero ad scribendum non admodum indocilis nec adeo piger aut imbecillus videtur. Quod si omnino redeundum est illi, qui tamen in Anglia permanere

mallet, fac obsecro, ut non quidem ex te sed alinde per te aliquod secum afferat, vnde possim in studia illi sumptus ministrare. Nunc uero alijs grauior necessitatibus. Caeterum eorum quae mitto, Catalogum scilicet mitto, si forte ex omnibus vnum reperiās quod legere libeat. Mitto et argenteum unum, in quo non pretium sed memoriale ames, nempe singularis amici tui D. Erasmi Imaginem. Aurum quod mittam non habeo, nec posset aurum nostrum vestro honeste conferri. Bene valeat Amplitudo tua Dignissime et Amplissime Domine Cancellarie et prolixioribus da veniam ineptijs meis, quae profusior charitas intempestiuius effundit et longius quam par est extendit. Ex Dresda iii Calendas Julias 1531.

“Eminentis<sup>s</sup> Magnificentiae Tuae

tota cordis deuotione deditus

Clientulus Johannes Cochlaeus.”

<sup>s</sup> I presume that “E” here stands for *Eminentis*. The endorsement of the letter is in a 17th century hand, “Johannes Cochlaeus Thomae More Angliae Cancellario n.º 13, 1531.”



## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

### MEDIAEVAL

*Five Centuries of Religion.* Vol. IV. The Last Days of Medieval Monarchism by G. G. Coulton. Cambridge University Press. 1950. pp. xv, 833. \$9.00.

Originally this was planned by the author to be volume V but his death in 1947 left his publishers with the choice of a permanent gap in the series or changing the present volume to IV and completing the work. The latter course seemed to them the wiser. It is perhaps as well, since the volume under review is frequently repetitious of matter in earlier volumes of the series. "It is with Constance, that the main theme of this present volume will begin" (p. 38). However, frequent digressions from his main theme to an earlier period result in a loss of continuity. This defect is aggravated by reason of the fact that the volume is divided into sixty-nine short chapters which flit from country to country and Order to Order with irritating frequency.

This reviewer charged Mr. Coulton in a review of an earlier volume in the series with having as his ultimate thesis the condemnation of monasticism in general and the justification of Henry VIII for its suppression in England. The present volume vindicates this charge. Mr. Coulton still fails to be able to distinguish between the ideals or doctrine at the basis of the system and the failure to meet those ideals on the part of so many individuals during the Renaissance period. Any well informed historian, Catholic or Protestant, is aware of the sad decline from the ideal of very many in the Church from popes to laymen. For the uninformed Catholic, however, Mr. Coulton's chapter and verse procedure may serve a convincing purpose; and the tone and interpretation throughout will undoubtedly serve as a stimulus to the non-Catholic mind for a continued hostility to the Church as an institution. It will strengthen an attitude, understandably expressed, that "many politicians in a democracy are unfit representatives of the ideal, so let us abolish democracy."

Most of the author's difficulties spring from an unwitting misunderstanding of Catholic theology and his attempt to explain it in the light of positivist philosophy. He thus attributes to some

medieval theologians a Calvinistic interpretation of salvation and evinces other peculiar ideas about things Catholic in his introductory chapter. His ideas about the Mass (p. 130), again illustrate his difficulty in grasping the real Catholic position. This gives rise to an attitude throughout that will make it all plausible enough to the non-Catholic and irritate the Catholic.

To him, as a result, "The greatest weakness of the middle ages was this perpetual ferment of thoroughly human affections and frailties under cover of a superhuman theory which was so seldom realized in practice" (p. 126). Monks and nuns were then as now human beings, but neither then nor now did the Church believe or teach that human affections and frailties can be controlled by any mere superhuman theory. Divine grace and the cooperation of the human will are required to follow the supernatural (rather than superhuman) way of life. What was conspicuously wrong in the period, therefore, was the failure of so many to give this cooperation. Coulton rightly adduces as prime factors in the decline of monasticism: too much secular control over the Church, the *in commendam* system, exemptions from visitation, *proprietas* on the part of monks and nuns, and the general attitude of the day favoring the "Reign of Custom" over the "Reign of Law."

In the face of these difficulties popes and reformers were generally quite helpless, as he often admits. Where they succeeded, if only temporarily, it was not because the reformed monks or nuns, even at Windesheim, were "Protestants" (p. 163) in whatever implication of the term. Neither can he reasonably claim objectivity when he finds fault with the monks' professed preoccupation with their own salvation, (p. 157) uses four ponderous volumes to point up their bad example and yet waves aside with a weak gesture any influence their good example may have had (p. 159).

The author's zeal to build a good case for himself also leads him into some peculiar logic. Thus he attacks papal "theoretical totalitarian pretensions" (p. 629) and "despotism" (p. 709) with the observation that "The papal requirements of implicit, unquestioning obedience, for centuries past, had gone far to send individualism to sleep" (p. 709). Yet twenty pages later Henry VIII's "wanton destruction of so many splendid buildings and so much of medieval art" is palliated with the remark that "The medieval artist was pitiless towards other men's work." He had too strong an impulse "to express his own individuality," which

the popes had just finished crushing. Henry VIII's despotism, on the other hand, is toned down by reason of the fact that he had "to be master in his own house" (p. 629). We are further assured that Henry's right to seize the pope's power "will probably remain a debatable question to the end of time." (p. 632). Moreover, Henry VIII's Commission granted dispensation from their vows to dispossessed monks, but popes had done as much, at least virtually, in some rare cases (p. 711). The Catholic fails to see the connection between the right of lay jurisdiction and dispensation in a purely ecclesiastical matter. Approximately the last third of the work is a quite labored attempt to justify Henry.

The book closes with two short Appendices on the *Comperda* and the Royal Visitors. The footnotes are given at the end of the volume according to chapter and page. (pp. 768-804.) The last 28 pages are given to an Index, of proper names for the most part.

Charles E. Schrader, University of Detroit.

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*Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne*, by Eleanor Shipley Duckett. New York. Macmillan. 1951. pp. xii, 337. \$5.00.

Professor of Classics Emeritus of Smith College, and distinguished researcher in later Roman and early Mediaeval culture, Eleanor Duckett has taken as subject of her most recent book a topic far from unfavored by English historical writers. The distinguishing feature of her work is her stress on the human side and character of Alcuin. Utilizing his letters, she throws light on the friendly disposition of the scholarly eighth century emigrant to Frankland, and on his great reliance on personal relationships in the furtherance of his life's work as well as the satisfaction of his sensitive, poetic nature. She also reveals Alcuin as a mediocre man: poetic, yet not a great poet; master-teacher but no original scholar; abstinent but not ascetic; monastic but not even a regular monk; a cleric yet one who never went beyond the order of deacon. At the same time, Alcuin was inspired by and in tune with the dynamic spirit of his age, Christianity. A traditionalist, he not only promoted and cultivated education and literary culture as handed down from antiquity, but staunchly defended Christianity as handed down from the Fathers. The dominating motive-power in his life was religious. He made the great, apparently painful step of emigrating to the court of Charlemagne prompted by the thought that he could thus contribute to the spread and improvement



of Christianity and culture on the continent. He insisted on the preservation of unity in the Church and purity in its faith. He affirmed the necessity of spirituality and abstinence among the clergy. At the same time he preferred a mild, Christlike approach to the bludgeon of force, as is exemplified by his advice relative to handling the Saxons and his action in the case of the cleric-refugee from Theodulph.

This latest work on Alcuin is well documented. Copious use is made of the excellent pertinent primary materials to be found in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, particularly the subject's own numerous extant *Letters*. An extensive bibliography is provided. In the reviewer's opinion the title is an unfortunate concession to sales promotion: the author does not stress Alcuin's friendship with Charlemagne and is enticed into an extensive "background" discussion of trite and commonplace events in the life of Charlemagne and the history of the Eastern Empire. As a possible result of space limitations thus imposed, the writer soft-pedals certain interesting aspects of the life of Alcuin, such as conditions in the Palace School. Nevertheless, the book should probably be in every college library, as the author does bring into clear relief Alcuin's personality and manner of procedure, as well as the fact that, despite lack of great genius, he had a profound constructive influence on the history of education, learning and Christianity.

Daniel D. McGarry, St. Louis University.

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*Patrology*, Rev. John Quasten, Vol. 1. Westminster, Md. Newman Press. 1950. pp. xviii, 349. \$5.00.

Father Quasten is to be congratulated on being the first to publish a manual of *Patrology* written originally in English. The present volume ends with St. Irenaeus. Judging from the amount of space devoted to this saint (pp. 287-313) and from the fact that Father Quasten following the more common opinion holds that *Patrology* in the West includes "all Christian authors up to Gregory the Great (d. 604) or Isidore of Seville (d. 636), and, in the East . . . to John Damascene (d. 749)," we may be quite certain that several volumes will be needed to complete the work.

The title "*Patrology*" is taken in a broad sense. As a matter of fact, the present volume is a history of early Christian writings, including all those which express the beliefs, traditions, practices, legends, folk-stories of the early Christians, whether

orthodox or heretical. Stress is laid not on the lives and characters of the writers, but on the religious content of their productions. Nor is the author concerned with the influence of these writings on the secular domain. The book, therefore, is a combination of Patrology, Patristics and the history of Christian literature.

After the first twenty-two pages of introduction, the volume is divided into eight chapters according to the eight general topics considered. These are: The Beginnings of Liturgical Formulas and Canonical Legislation, the Apostolic Fathers, Christian Folk Stories and Legends, Christian Poetry, Acts of the Martyrs, The Greek Apologists, Heretical Literature, Anti-heretical Literature. Each chapter is developed according to time sequence.

The book is well suited for classroom use. Two features in particular enhance its value for the student. First, comprehensive and up-to-date bibliographies are presented after the discussion of each extant writing. These bibliographies include: 1. critical editions of the text; 2. translations, especially into English; 3. articles and monographs. Exact references are given to magazine articles in various languages, especially in German, French, English, Italian and Spanish. The second feature follows from the introduction into the text of translated excerpts from the writings. These excerpts are of appropriate length and high quality, and may be expected to stimulate the student to further reading of early Christian literature. The thoroughness of the book is attested anew by the six indexes with which it concludes.

Clarence McAuliffe, St. Marys College, Kans.

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#### MODERN

*History of Russia*, by George Vernadsky. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1951. pp. 533. \$3.75.

The present volume is referred to as the third revised edition. Actually, only the last three pages of the May 1944 edition have been changed. Eight more pages have been added as well as a bibliography for each chapter. In the revised and new pages, some of the optimism which characterized the 1944 edition has been moderated. Nevertheless, the failure to bring the book up to date makes additional reading indispensable for the reader. For example, the treatment of religion ends with conditions as of September, 1943.

In the discussion of the economic development of the USSR, no mention is made of the use of millions of slave laborers. Overlooked, also, is such an invaluable work as that of Dallin and Nicolaevsky: *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia*. The number of peasants who were liquidated at the time of the first Five Year Plan appears to be greatly minimized. And the purge trials of 1936-38 seem to be at least partially exonerated of injustice as essential to national self-defense.

Teachers who use this book must take care to supplement its deficiencies with more realistic study.

William A. Nolan, Institute of Social Order  
St. Louis University.

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*François de Fénelon: Study of a Personality*, by Katherine Day Little. New York. Harper. 1951. pp. x, 273, \$3.50.

During the past decade, there has been a steadily growing interest in Fénelon's spiritual doctrine among people of many faiths. As Katherine Day Little remarks: "Once again Fénelon's pursuit of the Infinite and his direction of the way of perfection is finding a response among the religiously alert. His letters are becoming a spur to holy living." New translations of his *Spiritual Letters* and other writings have been well-received. Fénelon's influence upon the English-speaking world is a venerable one, with a history of its own—still largely untold. During his lifetime, he was spiritual adviser to the inquiring Scotsman, Chevalier de Ramsay, and to the Comtesse de Gramont, who is known to history as "la belle Hamilton" of the court of Charles II. The Society of Friends was attracted to his teaching even during his lifetime. Not being embarrassed by the institutions which Mme. Guyon and Fénelon seemed to be threatening, the Quakers readily assimilated their views and showed a way of combining the doctrine of pure love and inner contemplation with a very active concern for practical problems. By 1725 (a decade after his death), Fénelon's works were circulating freely in England and America. From John Woolman to Aldous Huxley, there has been a steady English-speaking *fénelonien* tradition which deserves further investigation.

The present study is an enthusiastic, unassuming account of the life and thought of the Archbishop of Cambrai. It uncovers no new historical facts and opens up no profoundly original vistas on his mind. Nevertheless, it is valuable as an indication of the reasons for his perennial attraction for spiritually-minded



people. The author makes an interesting approach to the court of Louis XIV from the standpoint of the personal religious problems of some of its members. Because of Fénelon's official position as preceptor to the King's grandson, the ill-fated Duke of Burgundy, and his intimate relations with the more serious noblemen and women at court, he provides an excellent focal point for studying the religious outlook of the ruling group. The famous controversy between Fénelon and Bossuet over the Quietistic effusions of Mme. Guyon is presented mainly from Fénelon's perspective. The Eagle of Meaux is pictured as a vindictive, uneasy old man; the doctrinal issues are not investigated in any detail or depth; the promptness of Fénelon's submission to Rome and the fruitfulness of his later episcopal endeavors are emphasized.

Little's study is most valuable in respect to Christian spirituality. It contains three notable features. First, Fénelon's notion of religious experience is traced to its antecedents in German, English and Spanish mysticism, as well as the French line of religious writers. In the light of St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales and M. Olier, Fénelon's discernment of a sound core of religious truth hidden away in Mme. Guyon's thought becomes understandable. Second, many apposite quotations are made from Fénelon's works in illustration of the various facets of his character and his decisions. And when he says, for instance, that "God appears in the little events of life . . . and it is in small affairs that our love of Him may be manifest," we are reminded of Teresa of Avila and see an anticipation of the other Teresa. Finally, a striking comparison is constantly made between Fénelon's advice as a spiritual director and the techniques of twentieth-century counseling and psychiatry. This correspondence could be duplicated in the cases of many other great Christian guides of souls. It is refreshing to read this reappraisal of Fénelon by a writer who approaches him in a fair and sympathetic way from outside the Catholic tradition.

James Collins, St. Louis University.

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#### AMERICAN

*Steel Trails to Santa Fe*, by L. L. Waters. Lawrence, Kan. University of Kansas Press. 1950. pp.500. \$4.00.

*Steel Trails to Santa Fe*, a history of the Santa Fe Railway System, is the first of what the University of Kansas hopes will be many investigations of business enterprises which have

shaped the destiny of Kansas and of the southwest.

In compliance with the wishes of officials of the Santa Fe, the author, a member of the faculty of the School of Business at the University of Kansas, aimed at a comprehensive and searching record of the railroad rather than a breezy Sunday-supplement sketch. This purpose as well as the nature of some of the topics treated helps to explain why some of the chapters make difficult reading.

To get the benefit of a quick survey, a busy teacher would profit from reading of the introduction and chapter seven, "Steel Trails to Santa Fe." Of special interest to this reviewer were the chapters dealing with the struggles between the Santa Fe and the D&RGW and between the Santa Fe and the SP, the peopling of the prairies, the growth of the Fred Harvey system, and parts of "Streamline to Streamline."

It is not a book for high school students. A serious college student might profit from its perusal. Any teacher of American history would find valuable material. Maps and graphs illuminate the text. The book evidently represents much research.

H. J. McAuliffe, St. Louis Univ. High School.

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*The Forty-Eighters. Political Refugees of the German Revolution of 1848*, edited by A. E. Zucker. New York. Columbia University Press. 1950. pp. xviii, 379. \$4.50.

This is the first history of the Forty-eighters, one of the groups of German political refugees to the United States. The work is a symposium by ten scholars who trace the history of this group of German Liberals from its beginning in Europe, through the period of its American exile, into the stages of adjustment to the United States. There are specific chapters on the Turners, the Radicals, Forty-eighters in Politics and in the Civil War, and a biography of Carl Schurz. The appendix contains a lengthy biographical dictionary of some 300 Forty-eighters compiled after painstaking research by the editor. This section alone makes the work an indispensable reference for the historian of American political, intellectual and immigrant history.

As a collection of essays the volume is not wholly integrated. There is needless repetition and evidence of difference in the style and methods of the various authors. However, the authors have produced a scholarly and favorable appraisal of the political and intellectual activities of the Forty-eighters. They por-

tray these Liberals as a very articulate and aggressive group of immigrants, which through its possession of political idealism, education and military experience, became an influence in America out of proportion to its numbers, only 4,000 in all. The early active participation of these Germans in American political life was in part due to the favorable time of their arrival. It was the exciting Civil War era. The pre-war decades of American "manifest destiny" offered fertile soil for Forty-eighter visionaries, who dreamed of a utopian World Republic with the United States as the center. The hotly debated issue of slavery in national politics inspired these political idealists to assume the leadership of their countrymen, who must be roused from their political inactivity and be shaken out of their blind loyalty to the Democratic Party which defended slavery.

Historians will agree that at this critical period of American history a significant role was performed by the Forty-eighters. They made possible the success of the Republican Party in the Northwest by winning into its ranks a large proportion of earlier German immigrants. They also rendered valuable military services during the Civil War. My own research has convinced me that much of the Forty-eighter literature betrays egotism and must be read critically. Such historians of the German political refugees as Bruncken and Erhorn, for example, definitely warn us against overestimating both the personal excellence and the abilities of Forty-eighters and their influence upon our history. Historical research shows that in every activity which brought fame to Forty-eighters earlier German Liberals had supplied the foundation upon which the newcomers could build. The present work under review confirms this fact. The various authors have set their evaluations of Forty-eighter contributions in the background achievements of earlier German Liberals, especially of the *Dreissiger* group in which there were also great leaders.

The volume omits one essential chapter, namely, the radical *Sturm und Drang* movement aimed at transplanting Germandom to America. The Forty-eighter braggadocios portrayed America as a vast desert devoid of intellectual attainments. They boasted of themselves as the *Fortschrittspartei* whose mission it was to light the way for American "intellectual freedom," and to dispel the prevailing "spiritual ignorance" and "blind faith" through the propagation of the German *Aufklaerung*, *Humanitaet*, and *Kultur*. In the East and Middle West they inaugurated a veritable crusade against Catholicism in particular, and religion in



general, in order to replace them by the reign of German Free Thought. Such radicalism aroused bitter opposition among German-Americans whom it divided permanently, and it inspired some of the violent outbursts of American Nativists. A study of their many radical reform programs reveals that these free-thinking Liberals possessed neither a sound German nationalism nor an appreciation of German culture. In religion, Forty-eighter influence was wholly destructive and became a power for agnosticism. Despite this omission, the volume is a worthy centennial memorial and constitutes an important addition to our German-Americana collection. Every college library should have this brief history of the Forty-eighters.

Sister M. Hedwigis, F.S.P.A., Viterbo College, LaCrosse, Wis.

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*From Versailles to the New Deal*, by Harold U. Faulkner. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1950. pp. ix, 388. \$2.50. (The Chronicles of America series, volume 51).

*The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, by Denis W. Brogan. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1950. pp. ix, 382. \$2.50. (The Chronicles of America series, volume 52).

*War for the World*, by Fletcher Pratt. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1950. pp. xi, 364. \$2.50. (The Chronicles of America series, volume 54).

At last, the Yale Chronicles, long used by many colleges and secondary schools as collateral reading, are being brought down to contemporary times under the editorship of Allan Nevins. In addition to the three volumes here mentioned, two others, dealing with the diplomacy of the 1918-45 period, are reviewed elsewhere, while the story of the "home front" in World War II is scheduled to appear soon.

The additions which are under consideration here follow the same general theme as earlier volumes—a simply told, readable story of relatively short epoch in American life. They possess the same advantages of clarity, brevity and ability to hold the interest of students. They also possess the same disadvantages of being without footnotes and of occasional superficiality. On the whole, as always, they are good and suitable for advanced secondary school or lower division college supplementary reading in history.

Specific comments on each volume are somewhat a matter of opinion. To this reviewer, the Faulkner volume devotes too scant

attention to the depression and Hoover administration. However, the treatment of the Harding and Coolidge regimes is unusually well-balanced and judicious. A question might be raised about the wisdom of selecting an Englishman to write of the era of F. D. R. However, Denis Brogan has been an acute observer of the American scene and is a facile writer. At times, it would seem his enthusiasm for the central figure carries him away as in his description of the supreme court battle. However, the presentation is generally sound. Fletcher Pratt is recognized as one of America's leading military historians and it would be difficult, especially in view of the inavailability of complete records, to quarrel with his volume.

Jasper W. Cross, St. Louis University.

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*Conspiracion Española? 1787-1789*, by José Navarro Latorre and Fernando Solano Costa. Institucion Fernando el Catolico (C.S.I.C.) de la Excva. Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza, Sección de Estudios Americanos, Vol. I, 1949. pp. viii, 361.

The prologue of Miguel Gómez del Campillo, long director of the Archivo Historico Nacional, who has unearthed its long-hidden wealth of the Indies by his invaluable guide, *Relaciones Diplomaticas entre España y los Estados Unidos* (2 v., Madrid, 1944,) would be enough to insure the worth of this study. The title echoes the pioneer work of T. M. Green, but is now well-flanked by question marks. The intrigue in question sought to win the Old Southwest from the nascent United States to the Spanish Empire. Or was its purpose to erect a buffer state that might treat with both countries, to the commercial advantage of its residents?

The authors' thesis, well-implemented by documents that fill more pages than their text, is that the conspiracy was fomented by Wilkinson, rejected or cautiously handled by most provincial authorities, and disapproved by higher Spanish officials on the policy-making level. Few American historians will question the strongly etched villainy of Wilkinson. Of more value are the documents, photostatic reproductions of autograph letters, memorials and maps. Some of these have appeared before, but this is the most complete and convenient collection on the subject.

The most significant aspect of this work is the light it throws on contemporary Hispanic American research in Spain. The great archives are now being exploited by enthusiastic, pains-

taking scholars, but Spanish libraries lack important printed sources and monographs published in this country. The authors make an eloquent plea for a greater exchange of historic materials and joint study by Spanish and American scholars. The need is clear when one finds no mention of Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, and mistakes in place names of maps adapted from American works. Inconsistencies in the spelling of proper names in the text may reflect close adherence to documents, but they are contrary to our editorial canons. It is to be hoped that a second edition will be edited as this work deserves. It should do much to promote the cooperation desired between students of Hispanic American history in Spain and the Americas.

Mary O'Callaghan, R.S.C.J., College of the Sacred Heart,  
Grand Coteau, La.

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*The Serene Cincinnatians*, by Alvin F. Harlow. New York. E. P. Dutton and Company. 1950. pp. 442. \$4.50.

This popularly-written history of Cincinnati is an addition to the "Society in America Series" which now includes similar monographs on Boston, Washington, Memphis, San Francisco, and New Orleans. The aim of these volumes is to exploit the individuality and idiosyncracies of sectional and municipal societies, to trace the growth of these communities, discover their local traditions and dominant personalities. In the case of Cincinnati the author finds this individuality in a serenity that is compounded of "the experience and philosophical composure of age, informed by historical consciousness, and with a strong blend of sound German imperturbability." As a characterization of the city in the twentieth century this seems a fair appraisal and analysis, but it is much less applicable to the earlier years.

Mr. Harlow makes full use of the many facets of municipal life as a convenient structure for historical composition. The vast array of factual data which he has gathered from Cincinnati newspapers and the writings of European travellers is effectively organized by this device. Many subjects of general historical interest are treated with the intimate detail that is possible in a restricted local setting. Thus the information presented in connection with the German immigrants and the rich culture which they contributed, the city's important commerce and meat-packing industry, the activity of European radicals, the impact of the slavery controversy upon a border community sensitive to its trade connections with the South, and the ramifications of boss-



ism and political corruption will all be welcomed by American historians. Residents of the city will read with interest the accounts of its older institutions and prominent families.

Of more questionable value are the lurid details which the author has seen fit to include in his treatment of the city's "Growing Pains" and in connection with other subjects. The exact location and progress of decomposition of a dead pig and other concrete evidence of inadequate sewage and garbage disposal will satisfy no reading appetite worthy of consideration. There was a regrettable sacrifice of historical perspective in favor of popular appeal in the selection of such material at several points in this book.

Several lacunae and errors are too serious to overlook. The reader will search in vain for any account of the Cincinnati origins of the "Ohio Idea." That Beecher's *Plea for the West* was written with "studied fairness" (p. 44) is a view betraying a misunderstanding of Catholicism as unfortunate as that of Beecher himself. Perhaps it is significant that neither the *Plea* nor Rev. John H. Lamott's scholarly *History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati* appear in Mr. Harlow's bibliography. Ohio State University is confused with Ohio University at Athens in a remark (p. 143) which places Rev. William H. McGuffey at the head of the Columbus school.

But although subject to the weaknesses of a book written primarily for popular consumption, *The Serene Cincinnatians* will be useful in the hands of the professional historian who is able to separate the wheat from the chaff. It suggests a useful pattern for the study of municipal history and contains valuable information about many subjects of genuine historical importance. The book includes a bibliography and index.

Thomas P. Conry, Xavier University.

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*Appeal to Arms: A Military History of the American Revolution*, by Willard M. Wallace. New York. Harper & Brothers Publishers. 1951. pp. viii, 308. \$4.50.

Seemingly precedent-shattering events when examined more closely often reveal deep roots in the long historical past. Today's turmoil and uncertainty over current national and international developments serve to underline the timeliness of this accurate, fast-moving military history of the American Revolution. *Appeal to Arms* throws light on hitherto little-emphasized facets of the colonial struggle for independence, which, in turn,

suggest interesting present-day parallels. Mr. Wallace's purpose in concentrating on military developments is to restore the balance which history-writing has for some time tipped in favor of the economic and social aspects of the Revolution. He has carefully analyzed an abundance of newly-available primary material including Clinton, Gage and Germain Papers. The result is an objective dispassionate appraisal of the strong and weak points of the contending parties. One is conscious throughout of the author's evident effort to be fair to the British; it is perhaps, at times overdone.

The first of the book's twenty-three chapters is devoted to the military background of the war, the last to the immediate aftermath of Cornwallis' surrender, while those in between deal with individual campaigns and battles from Lexington and Concord to Yorktown. Although the Colonists were admittedly ill-prepared to face the British regulars, nevertheless a start has been made months and even years before 1775 "in the organization of units, in the training of men, in the procurement of munitions and equipment. . . ." (P. 2.) We are told that the significance of Lexington and Concord, apart from their role in the Revolution itself, lies in the precedent established for subsequent history. "An unmilitary people, at first overrun by trained might, and eventually risen in their wrath and won a hard but splendid triumph." (P. 26.)

Each engagement is critically examined as to commanding and subordinate officers, plans of attack and defense, deployment of troops, casualties and other results on both sides. Famous figures, American, British and French, stand out as individual personalities and supply the human spark in what might otherwise be a dry statistical narrative. The characters of Washington, Arnold, Gates and the Howes are particularly well-drawn and merit careful consideration by the reader. More than usual attention is given to the part played by the native Loyalists, whose numbers reached astonishing proportions especially in the South. The patriot cause was constantly hampered by the ever-present localism, the temporary and short-term enlistments, the reliance upon militia, inadequate food, clothing and pay and the familiar contests for primacy between the military and civil authorities.

"Until Congress ceased its interference in matters of strategy and acting without consultation with its own field commander, the American war effort resem-

bled the late Stephen Leacock's rider who jumped on his horse and rode off in all directions." (P. 272).

The British, too, had problems in their dilatory and bungling generals and the maladministration from London. Although this combination contributed heavily to their final defeat, it was French military and financial assistance to the Colonies which proved the ultimately decisive factor in ending the military struggle. Thus the way was prepared for the establishment of "that structure of democratic government and society which was to become the envy and admiration of the world." (P. 274.)

Patricia Barrett, R.S.C.J., Maryville College, St. Louis, Mo.

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*James Harrod of Kentucky*, by Kathryn Harrod Mason. Baton Rouge. Louisiana State University Press. 1951. pp.xxii, 266. \$4.00.

Like so many makers of America James Harrod did not tell his own story. Unlike many others, James Harrod has been fortunate in the biographer who has given us another outstanding study in the Southern Biography Series.

The name Harrod looms large in the history of Kentucky, both during the pioneer days and the present time. The first white baby born in Kentucky was named Harrod Wilson; today Harrod's Creek and Harrodsburg preserve the name in addition to the many bearers of the name. James Harrod was a real pioneer, suffering perhaps, from that perennial disease of frontiersmen—overoptimism. But it was due to the persuasive powers of the optimists that the frontier was pushed westward. Perils of Indians, mosquitoes, fire and bugs were not the only hindrances; there was always the question of land titles and civil government. Harrod's story gives us a good cross section of the problems of the earlier frontier. In one respect his record is unique. Despite the years of continual Indian warfare, James Harrod was never wounded by an Indian.

The story is well written and filled with interesting details, including the story of how the Indians failed to destroy the turnip crop, because they did not appreciate the value of this so-called vegetable. A good index and critical essay on sources make the book useful and valuable for further study.

E. R. Vollmar, St. Louis University.



*The Theory and Practice of American National Government*, by Carl Brent Swisher. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Co. 1951. pp. viii, 949. \$5.00.

In a market already displaying a plethora of textbooks in American National Government, some justification should exist for the appearance of a new text in this field. Carl Brent Swisher's latest book, by making a worthy contribution to the search for means and methods to give life and substance to the teaching of American government, adequately furnishes that justification.

The author obviously agrees with those who believe that preparation for intelligent citizenship should be one of the major objectives of the basal course in political science. With this in mind, he places primary stress on the activities, policies, and motivation factors in government rather than on its structure and mechanism. Yet, at the same time, he makes it perfectly clear that an understanding of the forces and actions which underlie and largely determine the forms and operations of political bodies does not enable one to dispense with the account and description of those institutions. Thus, while the text introduces the student to the factors behind political organizations, it also furnishes him with sufficient historical, legal, and descriptive data necessary for a basic understanding of American government. A skillful blending of fact and analysis, and a balanced consideration of the "why" as well as of the "how" and "what" have resulted from this approach.

This middle ground will probably not satisfy those who remain firm in their insistence upon the purely descriptive and institutional type of approach, nor will it be entirely pleasing to those who reject the traditional pattern in their insistence upon less description and minutiae and on more attention to motivation, ideas, behavior patterns, values, and on the acquisition of certain basic tools for the analysis of politics. But for the large majority of teachers of political science who feel that a balance must be struck between these two extremes, the approach used by the author should be welcome and helpful.

It is obviously impossible to give adequate treatment in a single volume to all phases of American government. The reader might well feel, however, that the present work gives too little attention to the role of the Federal Government in respect to civil and political rights, to the use and effect of various propaganda devices, and to the formation and influence of public opinion. A fuller treatment of these topics would undoubtedly

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have contributed to the objectives sought by Professor Swisher. Yet these are largely matters of emphasis, upon which there is far from unanimous agreement among teachers of political science.

Written in an easy style, and supplemented by excellent charts and pertinent illustrations, the text provides lively and interesting reading. It should stimulate student interest in the American government course rather than discourage it as some of the more formidable and traditional texts on the market now do. Suffice it is to say that Dr. Swisher's book merits careful consideration as a basal text for the study of American national government.

Henry J. Schmandt, University of Detroit.

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*Life in the Far West*, by George Frederick Ruxton. Norman, Oklahoma. University of Oklahoma Press. 1951. pp. xviii, 252. \$3.75.

Recently Mr. Hafen with Mrs. Mae Reed Porter published a biography of George Frederick Ruxton who is known as one of the earliest reporters of the life of the typical "mountain-man" of the Far West during the hey-day of the fur trading era of the Rocky Mountain country. Now Mr. Hafen has republished Ruxton's famous *Life in the Far West*, Ruxton's fictionalized medium for presenting his views and impressions of the men and the country he had known in America. The book has long needed to be republished and all students of the Far West will welcome the appearance of the well known "novel." Ruxton, though he presents his material in something like the form of a fictional tale, did not intend his work to be considered merely as a story. He was a careful observer who related faithfully what he saw. He gave fictitious names to the companions and friends of his western life, but he reported faithfully what he saw.

Mr. Hafen is a recognized scholar operating in his own field. Probably no better editor could have been selected for this task. Readers will find that the editor has tried to identify all of the characters Ruxton introduced into his tale. The work of editing has been quite satisfactorily done. The addition of the several reproductions of western scenes by Alfred Jacob Miller lend a feeling of the West to the book. We are indebted to Mrs. Porter for that addition.

Joseph P. Donnelly, St. Louis University.

*Land Hunger in Mexico*, by Tom Gill. Washington, D. C. The Charles Lathrop Pack Forestry Foundation. 1951. pp86. \$2.00.

There was a time centuries ago before the Europeans came when the land of Mexico was relatively fertile, because the forests held the rain which fed the springs which watered the corn. Most of these forests have now disappeared because the agricultural Indian population, the *campesinos*, seeking ever more fertile soil, has cut into this timber to plant his *milpas* or corn fields, and because the charcoal burners cut down the forest trees to produce that very wasteful form of fuel for cooking in the homes. With the forests gone the torrential rains dash down the mountain side and the valleys carrying to the sea precious and life-giving soil and leaving the land cut with great gashes—erosion gulleys and canyons where formerly fields of corn and wheat could have been planted. This in brief is the main burden of the theme scientifically elaborated by a specialist of many years experience in agronomy and kindred studies.

The figures given, some of them pretty well known, are illuminating. Little more than seven percent of the total land area of Mexico is under cultivation as against forty-four percent in Italy, forty-three percent in Germany, and forty percent in France, while in Iowa the percentage is up in the nineties. Actually matters are still worse for Mexico. The Mexican-United States Agricultural Commission estimated that though 7.6 percent of Mexico's soil is adapted for cultivation, only 4.9 is cultivated annually, and only 3.4 percent annually harvested. Only one *hectare* in every eight is irrigated and only six percent of the arable area lies in regions sufficiently blessed with rainfall not to need irrigation. In the meantime the population grows apace. The remedy of water storage becomes frustrated because the torrential rains fill the reservoirs with silt. Experts point to many a colonial reservoir choked with water-borne earth; the one near Tuxpan has already lost most of its storage capacity; the Lerma river near Mexico city—"invaluable for irrigation, hydroelectric power, fire protection, sanitation, and industry"—will go on steadily shrinking because the forests that shelter its headwaters are being steadily destroyed. Therefore the water level of the large valleys where the metropolis lies is bound, according to the author's opinion, to go on gradually sinking. His prognostications are correct, for the most recent reports issuing from Mexico inform us that the valley floor has sunk 14½ inches in eight months to cause among other things a sew-



age backwash from the elaborate system created some years ago. In July, 1951, the Hydrological Commission for Mexico Valley was formed to tackle the problem.

Serious as the situation is, little is being done about it. State Conservation Congresses and other media suffer from an inadequate budget and are hopelessly understaffed in trained personnel; laws for the protection of the national parks cannot be enforced; measures and laws "run afoul of human lethargy, suspicion, ignorance, and political expediency" so that efforts at conservation are sure to be "fought, resisted, and wilfully distorted, because they will interfere with age-old patterns, and run athwart of human cupidity and organized greed."—The book is sympathetically written in friendly, coöperative spirit.

Peter M. Dunne, University of San Francisco.

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